TWO

NOVELS

In LETTERS.

BY THE AUTHORS OF

HENRY AND FRANCES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Hi narrata ferunt alió: menſuraque fœti
Creſcit; et auditis aliquid novus adjicit auctor.

OVID. MET.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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THE

Delicate Diſtreſs.

A NOVEL.

In LETTERS

BY FRANCES.

PART II.

L'amour ne peut jamais ſubſiſter, ſans peine, dans une ame delicate, mais ſes peines mêmes, ſont, quelquefois, la ſource de ſes plus doux plaiſirs.

RECUEIL ANONYME.

THE

DELICATE DISTRESS.

LETTER XXXVII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

York.

IN juſtice to thoſe friendly apprehenſions, which you ſeemed to ſuffer on my account, I think I ought to inform you, that the ſo-much-dreaded event, of an interview with the marchioneſs, is over, without my being ſenſible of the leaſt ill conſequence, from it. All lovely! all engaging, as ſhe is! I had armed *my heart* with the remembrance of her former treatment; and though *the little rebel* did flutter, at her ſight, I think its emotions were rather the effect of reſentment than a ſofter paſſion.

The worſt ſymptom I diſcovered in myſelf (I will be perfectly ſincere) was my being picqued, at the compoſure of her air and deportment, when ſhe firſt ſaluted me. Is it poſſible, Seymour, ſhe can be really indifferent? or is it only the artifice of her ſex, that makes her appear ſo?

As the room was very full, and ſhe ſtood at ſome diſtance from me, before I could approach her, ſhe was taken out to dance, by lord Bellingham.—When her firſt minuet was over, ſhe deſired I ſhould be called out; and though I felt the utmoſt reluctance, to accept the compliment, it was impoſſible to refuſe. I am certain I never acquitted myſelf ſo ill,

in my life. You have ſeen her dance, and therefore know that the eyes of the whole company, were engaged by her, and my confuſion paſſed unnoticed.

As I led her to her ſeat, ſhe wiſhed me *joy*, and aſked if the fair cauſe of *it*, was in the room? I anſwered, yes.—She then intreated I would preſent her to lady Woodville, whom ſhe longed to ſee, more than any perſon in England; as lord Seymour had told her, that ſhe was a perfect beauty.

I made no reply, but led her to the place where lady Woodville ſat, who received her with the utmoſt eaſe and politeneſs. I ſwear to you, my dear Seymour, that Emily never appeared half ſo lovely, in my eyes, as at that moment. The innocence and gaiety of her heart, lighted up her charms; and I flattered myſelf, that the marchioneſs's brow ſeemed overcaſt with the pale hue of envy.

Lady Harriet and ſhe renewed their acquaintance: they all, ſoon after, joined your ſiſter Sandford, and continued in the ſame party, for the remainder of the evening. I danced country dances with one of the miſs Broughtons, and returned home triumphing in the juſt preference, which my heart accorded to lady Woodville, on the compariſon I had drawn, in the ball room, between her and the marchioneſs.

Fear for me, no longer, my too timid friend; but congratulate me on the moſt arduous of all victories, the having conquered myſelf.

Your's, ever,

WOODVILLE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Hot-Wells, Briſtol.

Dear WOODVILLE,

I Thanke you for the attention you have ſhewn to thoſe apprehenſions, which you ſeem to think groundleſs. I did not expect to hear from you, during your ſtay at York. The conſtant hurry and diſſipation of the ſcene, would have been a ſufficient excuſe for your ſilence, both to me, and yourſelf, if you had not fancied you had good news to communicate.

I know you incapable of the ſmalleſt deceit, and am certain that you think your laſt a faithful tranſcript of your heart. But alas, my friend! you impoſe upon yourſelf, if you imagine your paſſion for the marchioneſs extinct; or that it is poſſible for you to give a preference, however juſtly deſerved, to any other woman breathing. Therefore, for the truly amiable lady Woodville's ſake, I conjure you to avoid all future compariſons, as I think it will be highly injurious to her merits, to put her on a level with that object, which your partiality has made you look upon as the ſtandard of perfection.

After the confeſſion of my own weakneſs, I condemn myſelf, for reaſoning with you, upon this ſubject;—I know it is preaching to the winds.—Our paſſions make our fate; and we ought to ſuffer, without repining, thoſe calamities we bring upon ourſelves: but what philoſophy ſhould enable us to bear the heart-rending agonies, of having involved the innocent in our puniſhment, and rendered the amiable, and deſerving unhappy! Who can ſpeak peace to my ſad heart, when I reflect upon the miſeries, in which I have plunged the ever-dear Charlotte Beaumont.

I know this horrid image will ſhock your nature, and, for a time, you will ſhudder at yourſelf. But quickly ſay, theſe are the gloomy viſions of Seymour's diſturbed brain. I would not make my Emily unhappy for the world—then fly directly, to the marchioneſs, to baniſh the ſad thought.—But I have done, for ever, on the theme; for if this picture does not ſpeak to your heart, I cannot paint more ſtrongly.

My wiſhes for your happineſs, but without hope, except in flight, ſhall ſtill attend upon you; and my higheſt eſteem ſhall ever wait upon the lovely lady Woodville.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XXXIX.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

My dear SEYMOUR,

I Confeſs your laſt letter ſhocked me extremely, but not from the motives you may poſſibly imagine. I am truly grieved to find your mind ſo overclouded, or ingrained, with the dark tints of melancholy, as not to allow your reaſon fair play. Anſwer me, were you not juſt then returned from the methodiſt's chapel, when you ſat down to write? When I expected congratulations, ſongs of triumph, and the laurel wreath, how could you cruelly pop an old-faſhioned prophecy upon me, of what never was, nor is, nor ever ſhall be!

But away with thy diſmal preſages, thou Pſeudo-Magus! Have I not told thee, infidel as thou art, that no action of my life, ſhould ever diſcover the real ſtate of my heart to lady Woodville, or make her think it was not all her own? Have I not been married above eight months, and am I not, now,

now, juſt as tender, and obliging, as the firſt day we were united?

Hadſt thou real pity, or compaſſion, thou wouldſt adviſe me to deſiſt from my purſuit of the marchioneſs, on her account, rather than lady Woodville's. O Seymour! what a triumph would it be, if I could humble this proud beauty, and pay her ſcorn for ſcorn! again reduce her to that ſoft trembling voice, with which ſhe firſt uttered thoſe dear ſounds, *I love!*

Recal her image to your view, on the firſt night we met her, at the Bois de Boulogne.——What perfect beauty, amazing grace, and native modeſty, beamed round her angel form!—There is a picture for you: and, I hope, much more to the life, than your Tiſiphoné

I have often thought of aſking you, by what taliſman, or ſpell, your heart was preſerved, from becoming her inſtant victim? You did not know your Charlotte then. Perhaps you felt the marchioneſs's power, and loved like me; but, in pity to your friend, endeavoured to ſuppreſs your paſſion. I ſhould adore you, if I thought it were ſo.

I do not think her half ſo beautiful, as ſhe was then, though her perſon is much improved.—She can be gazed at, now, without a bluſh; and wears rouge, I ſuppoſe, in order to heighten the fineſt complexion in the world.

We met this day on the race-ground. She has engaged me to hold a Pharo-bank for her, at night; and engaged me to prevail on lady Woodville to be of the party.———She ſeemed vaſtly charmed with her; but whenever ſhe mentions her, aſſumes a peculiar air of ſenſibility.——I think I heard her ſigh, when ſhe pronounced the name.

What an odd mortal was I, to ſit down to write, when I have ſcarce time to breathe. Sir James Thornton's mare was diſtanced: he has loſt above five hundred pounds; but what is much worſe, I think he has loſt himſelf.——I never ſaw ſuch an al-

teration in any creature : I am almoſt ſorry I brought him to Woodfort.

The ladies fancy he is in love, but I cannot get the ſecret out of the ſimpleton. Lady Wodville and her nymphs are much yours. I intreat you will drink half a dozen bumpers of Burgundy, before you ſit down to write again, to

Your's ſincerely,

WOODVILLE,

LETTER XL.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

AH, Seymour ! what a tale have I to unfold to you ! I am undone, for ever loſt to virtue, relapſed again. to all my former follies —— I doat, I die for love ! Do not deſpiſe me, Seymour, but once again ſtretch forth thy friendly hand, and ſtrive to ſave a ſinking wretch. Alas, it is in vain ! fate overwhelms me, and I muſt yield to the impetuous torrent. But hear my ſtory, firſt, before you pronounce ſtern ſentence on me, and guilty as I am, perhaps you will pity me.

For ſome days paſt, the marchioneſs contrived to throw herſelf perpetually in my way, and ſtrove to engage me in the moſt intereſting converſations, by hinting at particular ſcenes, in which we had formerly been actors. Fool that I was, the recollection charmed me, and my weak heart expanded with delight, at the repetition of its former follies.

Laſt night, your ſiſter, lady Sandford not being well, declined going to the ball. The marchioneſs ſent to lady Woodville, to deſire ſhe might attend her to the rooms. Emily politely aſſented, and they went together—ſhe returned and ſupped with us.

After

After ſupper, ſhe ſaid ſhe hated being cooped up in a carriage, at the courſe, and aſked if I could lend her a horſe, for the next day. The ladies informed her that no woman of faſhion, ever appeared on horſeback, at a race. She replied, ſhe had no idea of a *ſalique* law, impoſed by jockies; that ſhe deſpiſed all vulgar prejudices, and would be the firſt to break through this arbitrary rule, if ſhe could engage any lady to accompany her.

She ſoon prevailed on miſs Weſton, who rides remarkably well to be of her party, and again applied to me for a horſe. I told her I had not one, that had been uſed to carry a lady, but if ſhe would venture on that which I uſually rode, it ſhould be at her ſervice.

She accepted my offer, and after dinner, the next day, Fanny Weſton, Ransford, and I, attended her at lady Sandford's; and ſure there never was ſo lovely a figure as ſhe made, on horſeback!

" Diana, huntreſs, miſtreſs of the groves!
" The charming Iſabel, ſpeaks, looks, and moves."

When we came to the race-ground, all the company thronged round her, and though the horſes were then running, ſhe ſeemed to be the ſole object of every one's attention. She affected to be diſpleaſed at the general gaze, and ſaid if there was room in lady Woodville's carriage, ſhe would get into it. We rode up immediately to it, but on perceiving that Emily was in the chariot, and lady Harriet with her, ſhe would not ſuffer me to mention her deſign, leſt it might be inconvenient to my wife, whoſe preſent condition is now very apparent.

Thornton was by the ſide of the chariot, talking to the ladies who were in it. He immediately retired, to make way for us to come cloſe. A croud had followed us, and ſome one of their horſes ſtruck that on which the marchioneſs rode;—it immediately made an effort to diſengage itſelf from the

throng, and in ſpite of all ſhe could do, ran away with her, with ſuch an amazing ſwiftneſs, that it ſeemed to outgo all the racers.

I followed inſtantly—O Seymour! judge of my emotions, when I ſaw her fall to the ground! when I came up to her, ſhe was ſenſeleſs, her eyes cloſed, and her face covered with blood and duſt. I raiſed her in my arms, and held her to my breaſt; but unable long to ſuſtain her weight, in that poſture, I ſunk down gently, held her on my knees, and gazed in ſtupid ſilence.

At that inſtant, numbers came up to us; among the reſt, Thornton, and lady Woodville, who on perceiving blood upon my cheek, fainted.—She might have fallen to the earth, for me—I was inſenſible to all the world! Thornton luckily caught her in his arms, and conveyed her to her chariot.

Notwithſtanding all the applications that were uſed, the marchioneſs ſeemed irrecoverable, and my deſpair is not to be expreſſed. A gentleman that was preſent, opened a vein in her arm. She then lifted up her languid eyes, and looking round her, cloſed them quick again, and whiſpered, as ſhe lay upon my boſom, "I die, my lord; but "ought not to repine, ſince I expire within your "arms."

A crimſon bluſh ſucceeded to her paleneſs, and a vaſt ſhower of tears ſoon followed. I know not what reply I made, but I have reaſon to ſuppoſe it muſt have been expreſſive of the complicated paſſions which affected me. I carried her in my arms, to lady Winterton's coach, and conveyed her in that manner, to your ſiſter's.

We had all the aſſiſtance this place could afford. My ſpirits are ſo extremely harraſſed, that I cannot write more, than juſt to give you the ſatisfaction to know, that ſhe is not in danger—would *I* could ſay as much.

Adieu, till next poſt.

WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

AS ſoon as the fair invalid was laid on the bed, and the medical tribe who were ſummoned from all quarters had performed their uſual evolutions, of pulſe-feeling, profound looks, and long preſcriptions, I knelt by her bed-ſide, and tenderly inquired her health? She told me, that though much hurt, ſhe did believe, the only incurable wound ſhe had received, was given by herſelf, in the weak confeſſion ſhe had made, when ſhe thought her ſituation had placed her beyond the neceſſity of longer diſguiſing the tender ſentiments, ſhe felt for me. She would give worlds, to recal what ſhe had ſaid; but, as ſhe knew that was impoſſible, begged I would not deſpiſe her, or meanly think her capable of a deſign, to rival lady Woodville; and that the moment ſhe was ſufficiently recovered, ſhe ſhould fly me, and England for ever.

Think of my ſituation, Seymour! and forgive my weakneſs; while I tell you I poured forth all the fondneſs long concealed, even from myſelf, within my labouring boſom, and ſwore, with too much truth, I never had, one moment, ceaſed to love her. She ſighed, and wept; I kiſſed her lily hand, and bathed it with my tears.

How much longer we ſhould have continued in this ſituation, I know not, had I not been rouſed, by a meſſage from lady Woodville, to inquire the marchioneſs's health, and an excuſe for not making the inquiry in perſon, on account of her own indiſpoſition. I ſtarted, Seymour—and recollected, that I had a wife.

I flew home, inſtantly; found Emily had been blooded, and put to bed.—I rejoiced at being able to avoid the ſight of that amiable woman; ſaid I would not diſturb her, by going into her chamber,

and ordered another bed to be got ready for me, againſt night.

Conſcious guilt will make a coward of the braveſt man. I could not bear my own thoughts.—I dreaded being alone. I went to the coffee-houſe, to drown reflection in noiſe and nonſenſe. The converſation turned, intirely, on the accident that had befallen the marchioneſs, and I replied with the utmoſt complacency, to every trifling queſtion that was aſked, becauſe it related to her.

I ſoon grew weary of this ſcene. I walked out, and found my ſteps inſenſibly ſtraying towards the marchioneſs.—By chance I met Thornton, who with more livelineſs in his looks than I have ſeen for a long time, told me lady Woodville was much better, and would be glad to ſee me; that ſhe had expreſſed ſome uneaſineſs, at their not ſuffering me to go into her chamber, when I called at home, though ſhe was then aſleep.

I went directly back with him, and ſaw my Emily; ſhe looked pale, and diſpirited, queſtioned me with great tenderneſs about the marchioneſs, and ſaid the fright ſhe had ſuffered, on her account, joined to her apprehenſion of my having received ſome hurt, had quite overpowered her; but ſhe would endeavour to become a ſtouter ſoldier. Sweet gentleneſs! how thy ſoft looks upbraid me!

I determined not to go to the marchioneſs, that night, but ſent to know how ſhe did, and ſat down to write my laſt letter to you. In that, and this, are contained only the tranſactions of one fatal day.—Where my narrative will end, I know not! but the only relief that is, at preſent, left me, is the pouring out my heart to you.—I again implore you to pity its weakneſs, and pardon its follies.

Your's ever,

WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

TOO cruel Seymour! how am I to interpret ſuch an obſtinate ſilence? am I ſo far ſunk in your eſteem, that you diſdain even to hold converſe, or correſpondence with me? Now was the time, to have exerted all your friendſhip, and ſtopped me on the very verge of ruin.—But you diſclaim the painful office of counſelling an incorrigible, ſelf-willed man; and I now triumph in your cold neglect. Left to myſelf in ſuch a critical juncture, I have a higher pride, in being able, from my own conduct, to claim your friendſhip and eſteem, than I could have felt, had I acted conformably to your prudent advice, and declined the meeting of my moſt dangerous foe.

The morning after the date of my laſt, I was ſurprized to find lady Woodville in the dining-room, dreſſed, and waiting breakfaſt for me, when I came down ſtairs, between ſeven and eight o'clock.—— I thought ſhe looked paler, and more delicate, than I had ever ſeen her, with an air of reſignation impreſſed upon her countenance, which, added to its natural ſweetneſs, had rendered her one of the moſt intereſting objects, I had ever beheld. The tenderneſs with which I enquired her health, ſeemed to animate her languid frame, and her eyes quickly recovered their native luſtre.

After breakfaſt, ſhe propoſed accompanying me to ſee the marchioneſs. I was embarraſſed beyond meaſure; but knew not how to prevent her doing, what appeared to be ſo proper. Juſt then, Thornton, luckily, came into the room, which afforded me a moment to recollect myſelf. I told her I thought it would be better to ſend, firſt, to inquire how the marchioneſs had reſted, and whether

ſhe

ſhe was yet able to receive our viſits? Emily ſeemed to bluſh at her want of conſideration, and readily aſſented to my propoſal.

Williams was diſpatched with a card, and ſoon returned with a verbal anſwer, that the marchioneſs was much better, and would be glad to ſee us. I hoped ſhe would have had addreſs enough, to have ſaved me from the embarraſſment, which ſuch an interview muſt give me. But there was, now, no retreating; and Emily and I got into the chariot, together.

When we were ſhewn into the marchioneſs's apartment, ſhe was lying on a couch, in the moſt elegant deſhabille.—What a ſubject for an Apelles, Seymour! It was with difficulty I could reſtrain myſelf from expreſſing the tranſports that I felt. She roſe to receive lady Woodville, with ſuch an air of graceful dignity, as queens might gladly learn. I ſaw that Emily bluſhed, and looked confuſed, at her amazing ſuperiority, but was relieved by the entrance of your ſiſter, lady Sandford.

The marchioneſs's behaviour towards me, was remarkably cold and diſtant; and I thought ſhe overacted her part ſo much, that any other woman in the world, but Emily, muſt have perceived ſomething extraordinary, in the change of her manner; but, happily, lady Woodville is a ſtranger to ſuſpicion.

You may ſuppoſe our viſit was not a very long one, yet it appeared to me inſufferably tedious; and I thought myſelf more obliged to Emily, when ſhe roſe to go away, than ever I had been to any one, in my life. I had the happineſs to hear that the marchioneſs had received no hurt, from her fall, that could be of any ill conſequence: the blood that appeared, was from a ſlight contuſion in her noſe.

Ransford came to wait on her, while we were there; and as he handed my wife to her carriage, and I was quitting the room, the marchioneſs, with the

the utmoſt *fierté*, though in a low voice, ſaid, Lord Woodville, return inſtantly, or never!

The manner, with which ſhe pronounced theſe words, aſtoniſhed and confounded me. I then ſaw that her behaviour towards me was the effect of reſentment, not art;—yet how had I offended, how forfeited that tenderneſs, which ſhe expreſſed for me, the day before? Inexplicable creature! myſterious woman! of all riddles, the hardeſt to be expounded by the boaſted wiſdom, of thy vaſſal, man!

I bowed, and withdrew, in the utmoſt amazement, at her conduct; and, by vainly endeavouring to account for it, I fell into ſuch a profound reverie, that I did not even perceive the motion of the carriage till it ſtopped at our lodgings.

I then felt myſelf aſhamed, at not having taken the leaſt notice of Emily, during our little journey; and, by way of ſaying ſomething, told her I had been conſidering whether we might not ſet out for *London*, the next day, if it was agreeable to her. She ſmiling ſaid, my will was hers; and though quite unprepared for ſuch an expedition, as ſhe did not know I purpoſed going ſo ſoon, ſhe would be ready at what hour I pleaſed.

I knew not what I ſaid, when I talked of London, and had not the leaſt intention of carrying her there; but my blunder was lucky, as it gave me an opportunity of paying a well-deſerved compliment, to her complacency, and condeſcenſion, and alſo of paving the way to my going, without her, if the ſovereign arbitreſs of my fate, ſhould command me to attend her. I likewiſe appeared to have the merit of ſacrificing my own inclination to hers, by readily conſenting to her returning to Woodfort.

Upon theſe terms we parted, and I ſet out, with a ſlow pace, and a diſturbed mind, to meaſure back the ground, I had juſt paſſed. During my walk, I reflected upon the diſagreeable neceſſity, I had laid myſelf under, of acting the hypocrite, with a woman,

man, whoſe amiable qualities compelled me to eſteem her, and whoſe perſonal charms fully intitled her to the fondeſt affection of an unengaged heart. Deceit cannot dwell long with honour; and I determined either to ſacrifice my paſſion to my virtue, or, at once, to triumph over character, honour, and every other conſideration in life, and act the villain boldly.

Almoſt diſtracted with the ſtruggles of my mind, I entered the marchioneſs's apartment. I found her lying on a couch, with a handkerchief cloſe to her eyes, which ſhe removed, upon my entrance, and ſhewed her lovely face, all bathed in tears. I advanced, with precipitation, and would have kiſſed her hand, but ſhe withdrew it from me, with ſuch an air of coldneſs, and diſdain, as almoſt petrified me: then riſing, briſkly, ſaid, is your wife with you?

I gravely anſwered, No. She then burſt into a violent paſſion of tears, and exclaimed, Ah, Woodville! after what had paſſed between us, but a few ſhort hours ago, how could you uſe me thus? How did you dare to inſult me, with the preſence of that object, whoſe *legal* claim to your affection, renders mine criminal?

I was ſo much alarmed, and confounded, at the vehemence of her voice, and manner, that I knew not what anſwer to make, but told her, it was lady Woodville who had propoſed our coming together, and that I knew not how to avoid attending her, without running the hazard of giving her offence.

What, then, you fear, as well as love her, and you avow it, to my face! —— I would not, willingly, madam, inflict unneceſſary wounds, upon the victim I have ſacrificed to you, nor add brutality to perfidy. —— Her colour roſe to crimſon.

So then, my lord, you vainly hope to keep a flame alive, in two ſuch hearts, as mine, and lady Woodville's! to love *en Turk*, and play our paſſions off, againſt each other, for your ſport! —Amazing vanity!

vanity! But know, it will not do, my lord; her ſoft, inſipid nature might, perhaps, ſubmit to be the loved ſultana of the day, then yield her place to me, or any other, and meanly take it back again, from your caprice; but I will reign alone, or elſe deſpiſe that tranſitory toy, the empire of your heart.

You may remember, madam, there was a time, when more than you now aſk, or I can give, my hand and heart, were offered at your feet: you then diſdained to accept them; they are no longer free. For doating on you, as I do, with all the fervor of diſtracted paſſion, I cannot be inſenſible to the merits of unoffending innocence, and love; nor ceaſe, one hour, to feel the anguiſh of remorſe, for having injured lady Woodville.

If the frankneſs of this confeſſion, madam, ſhould exclude me for ever from your love, I have the conſolation to know, that it muſt inſure me your eſteem.—Without ſome claim to the latter, I ſhould be unworthy of the former. But if, under theſe unhappy circumſtances, you ſtill can condeſcend to feel that paſſion, which you have profeſt, let me, upon my knees, conjure you to tell me, how I may preſerve my honour, without forfeiting, what is as dear to me, your love.

I had knelt at her feet, during the latter part of this diſcourſe.—Her eyes had ſtreamed.—I do not bluſh to own, that mine were not quite dry. She remained ſilent, for ſome minutes, and when I preſſed her to ſpeak, ſhe replied, with a determined voice and manner: There is no alternative, my lord; you muſt fly with me, or never ſee me more.

I had dreaded ſuch a propoſal, yet could ſcarce believe ſhe would make it, and, with the utmoſt agitation, cried out, Impoſſible! But before I could utter another ſyllable, ſhe laid her hand upon my lips, and ſaid, I command you ſilence.—You muſt not, ſhall not, anſwer me. I know you are to quit this place, immediately: would I had never ſeen it. But as you are, now, to determine the fate

of

of one, whoſe love for you, has made her leap the bounds preſcribed to her weak ſex, O do not reply, raſhly! but, take the laſt moment that can be allowed, before you pronounce the doom of a fond wretch, who has placed more than her life—her happineſs, or miſery—in your power.

I roſe, and bowed, totally unable to ſpeak, or even to think, from the confuſion of my ideas.—She took advantage of my ſilence, to tell me ſhe would not receive any letter upon this ſubject, from me, but that ſhe expected to ſee me, at twelve o'clock, next day; and ſmiling added, leſt you ſhould forget, I will preſent you with a little monitor, which will remind you of your abſent friend.

She then gave me her picture, which I had, a thouſand times, in our firſt acquaintance, ſolicited, in vain. I kiſſed it with tranſport. See here, ſaid ſhe, and drew a miniature of me, which I had formerly given her, out of her pocket; and now take care that you preſerve my image, as carefully as I have done yours.

Then looking at her watch, you muſt leave me; it is near lady Sandford's dining hour, and I muſt dreſs. How ſlowly will the miſerable moments creep, till we two meet again! But I ſhall defy time, after that, as it can neither add to, or diminiſh from, the felicity, or anguiſh, which muſt then, irrevocably, be my portion.

I intreated her to ſpare me, on that ſubject, as ſhe would not permit me to reply. You muſt withdraw, then, immediately, my lord, for I can neither think, or ſpeak, on any other theme. She permitted me to kiſs her hand, before I left her; and ſeemed to have conquered all thoſe violent paſſions, which poſſeſſed her at my approach. I confeſs I quitted her, with infinite reluctance, and ſo I now muſt you.

WOODVILLE.

LETTER XLIII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

I Parted from the marchioneſs in a more irreſolute and confuſed ſtate of mind, than I had ever before experienced. I well knew that all the colour of my future fate, depended on the reſolution I was compelled to make within a few ſhort hours. I found it abſolutely impoſſible to determine on any thing, from a conſciouſneſs of the importance, of my final determination.

Never, ſure, had reaſon and paſſion a ſeverer ſtriſe. One moment, I reſolved to ſacrifice every thing to love; to fly with my adored Iſabella, into ſome diſtant country, "and live in ſhades with her, and love "alone." The next inſtant, the image of the gentle Emily, obtruded itſelf upon my imagination, in her preſent ſituation; pale, and dying. Methought I heard her laſt ſoft ſigh expreſs my name; I felt myſelf a murderer, and ſtarted at my ſhadow.

In this diſtracted ſtate, I had wandered a conſiderable way in the fields, and ſaw night coming on apace, without power, or inclination, to think of returning to York, when I heard the ſound of a horſe, galloping towards me.—The man who rode him, called to me, to deſire I would direct him the neareſt way to the town, and alſo, if I could inform him where lord Woodville lived.

The ſound of my own name ſurprized me, and I inquired his buſineſs.—The fellow quickly knew me; he inſtantly alighted, and told me he was a ſervant of Sir Harry Ransford's, and had been ſent, expreſs, to let his young maſter know, that lady Ransford had eloped, two days before, with captain Barnard; and that it was ſuppoſed they were gone either to France or Ireland. He added, that the poor old knight was almoſt diſtracted, for the loſs of his lady, and wanted his ſon to purſue the raviſher.

The

The ſervant preſſed me to mount his horſe, and expreſſed his ſimple aſtoniſhment at my being by myſelf, in ſuch a loneſome place, at that hour. I refuſed his offer, and we walked on, together. It was near eight o'clock, when I got home; and as it was the laſt night of the races, I did ſuppoſe Emily was gone to the ball—but I found her alone.

I thought ſhe looked as if ſhe had been in tears, though her eyes ſparkled when ſhe ſaw me. This little circumſtance had its full weight; and the unaffected joy ſhe ſhewed at my return, without ſeeming to be alarmed at my abſence, when contraſted with the violence of temper, which the marchioneſs had diſcovered, in the morning, ſo far turned the ſcale, as to determine me to remain a ſlave to the obligations I owe to my wife, and the world: and though I am perſuaded, that I ſhall never be able to extract the arrow from my wounded heart, I will ſuffer it to rankle, there, in ſilence, and endeavour to derive fortitude ſufficient to bear the anguiſh, from the noble conſideration of having ſacrified my pleaſure—I muſt not ſtile it happineſs—to my duty. —What would my friend have more?

My mind grew much calmer, after theſe reflections.—In order to prevent my relapſing, I locked up the marchioneſs's picture, in my writing box, and threw the key into the fire, that it might not be in my power to gaze away my reaſon, for that night, at leaſt.

Emily was much ſurprized, at the account of lady Ransford, and captain Barnard—her own innocence keeps her a child.—She begged I would not mention the ſtory before lady Harriet.—I knew there had been an attachment between the captain and her, but thought it long ſince over—yet why ſhould I imagine that time could conquer love? O! never, never, Seymour!

Lady Woodville and I ſupped, tête à tête; the young folks, as ſhe calls them, though they are all older than herſelf, ſtaid late at the ball.—I was impatient

impatient for Ransford's return, and had ſent to the aſſembly room, to look for him, but he was not there.—I ordered every thing to be in readineſs, for his ſetting out immediately on his filial errand.

When the ladies and Thornton came in, I retired to my chamber, to wait for Ransford. By frequently revolving my unhappy ſituation in my mind, I began to conſider it in a new light; which at once increaſed my miſery, and confirmed me in the juſtneſs of the reſolution, I had before taken, of bearing it in ſilence. Upon ſtrict examination, I found I was the only culpable perſon of the three; and therefore, ought to be the only ſufferer.———

Wretch that I was, I had deceived myſelf; and in conſequence of that error, had impoſed upon another! How vain to imagine that the marchioneſs's cruel treatment of my love, her preferring age, and infirmity, to me, on account of ſuperior rank and riches, had ſupplied me with arms ſufficient to vindicate my freedom, and break her tyrannic chains. O Seymour! they are twined about my heart, and nought, I fear, but death, can looſe them!

It was near three o'clock, when Ransford came in; he ſeemed in very high ſpirits—when I told him of lady Ransford's ill conduct, he ſaid he was not in the leaſt ſurprized; he had long known that his ſtepdame only waited for a gallant, who had ſpirit enough to engage in ſuch a frolic with her; and he thought his father had a fair riddance.

I was ſurprized to hear him treat the affair ſo lightly, as I know him to be a man of nice honour. I then aſked him, whether he intended going immediately to his father? he anſwered, no; ſaid he was engaged in a purſuit of the utmoſt conſequence, which he could not quit, and that he did not believe he ſhould ſee Ransford Hall, for ſome time.

I told him I thought his father would have reaſon to reſent his neglect, and preſſed him to wait upon him, though but for one day. He perſiſted in his reſolution, and we parted. I think it odd, that Ranſford

ford did not communicate his motives for acting in this manner, to me;—but what have I to do with other people's affairs? my poor tortured mind is ſufficiently encumbered, with its own.

I think I need not tell you that I paſſed a ſleepleſs night.—At breakfaſt, I told Emily that I ſhould be ready to ſet out with her for Woodfort, after dinner, if ſhe pleaſed. She ſeemed delighted, and the carriages were ordered, at half an hour after four.—I intreated Sir James Thornton to return with us, for a few days; he made a thouſand excuſes; but, at length, complied, at lady Woodville's requeſt.

I was now to enter upon the moſt arduous taſk of my whole life; that of taking an everlaſting leave of the woman, whom I doated on—and in this higheſt act of ſelf-denial, I muſt appear, to her, a volunteer! I am grieved, that Brutus ſhould have ſaid, "virtue was but a name." O let me bend before her awful ſhrine, and pay my grateful vows, for the kind aid ſhe lent me, in that hour of trial!

I endeavoured to aſſume an air of calmneſs, on my entering the marchioneſs's apartment. She fixed her eyes, her piercing eyes, in ſtedfaſt gaze upon me, as if to read my ſoul. A minute paſſed in ſilence. I found ſhe would not ſpeak, and hardly ſeemed to breathe. You ſee before you, madam, an unhappy man, who dares not purchaſe tranſport, with remorſe; and, therefore, turns ſelf-baniſhed from her ſight, whom moſt his ſoul adores!

She quick exclaimed, is it poſſible! and am I then deſpiſed, neglected for a wife! Cold, and unloving Woodville! Why did you ever feign a paſſion for me? Why ſtrive to make me think it ſtill ſubſiſted in your frozen heart? You cannot bear remorſe! Ungrateful man! ſhould not I have ſhared it with you? Is then my fame leſs dear than yours? and did I heſitate one moment to ſacrifice that, and myſelf both, to you? Obſcurity and infamy were not bars to me, whilſt you, infirm of mind, deſert the woman

man you pretend to love, for fear your wife ſhould cry.

True, madam, I replied, I would not give her cauſe to weep, for worlds nay, what is more, for you! You have acknowledged, too, that the ſtep your kindneſs prompted you to take, muſt be attended with ſevere regret alſo, on your own part.—What ſhould I feel, then, from rendering you unhappy! I have not fortitude to brave ſuch two fold agony.

O! you have half that guilt to anſwer for already. But my pride revolts at my own meanneſs. Leave me, Sir—leave me, for *ever*, Woodville! I ſhall obey you, madam, but before we part, *for ever*, ſuffer me, at leaſt, to ſatisfy your pride, by declaring that no man ever loved, with fonder paſſion, than I now feel for you—how far time and abſence may be able to conquer it, I know not; but ſhould they fail of their uſual effects, it is impoſſible that I ſhould bear it long; and now, my Iſabelle, one laſt embrace—may angels guard you!

I ruſhed out of the houſe, like a diſtracted man, but had not walked a quarter of a mile, before the rectitude of my conduct towards this too lovely woman, began, by flattering my pride, to qualify my paſſion; and I returned home, in a more rational ſtate of mind, than I have known, for ſome time.

Rejoice with me, my friend; the conflict's paſt! and be juſt enough to acknowledge my triumph more compleat, than the much boaſted one of Scipio. He only reſigned an *alienated heart*—while I forego *a ſelf-devoted victim!*

I am, this moment, going to ſtep into the coach, for Woodfort, where I ſhall impatiently long to ſee you. But, O write ſoon, to ſtrengthen, and applaud, my growing virtue.

Your's,

WOODVILLE.

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LETTER XLIV.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Hot Wells.

BELIEVE me, Woodville, there is not another event within the power of fortune, which could now give me half the joy that I received from your laſt letter. I do congratulate my noble friend, myſelf, and all the world, on that heroic virtue, which has enabled you to paſs the *ordeal fire*, unſullied and unhurt. Rather let me ſay, that like the *Amianthus* *, you have gained new whiteneſs, from the flames, and ſhine with brighter luſtre, than even unblemiſhed innocence can boaſt.

I find my ſtile, perhaps, too much elevated, by my ſentiments, but ſudden tranſitions muſt have ſtrong effects I had ſcarce a hope of your eſcaping the ſnare that was laid for you, and mourned your fall from honour, with infinitely more regret, than I ſhould have done your death. Had the latter happened, my grief would have been ſelfiſh; but in the other caſe, I felt for thoſe pangs which you muſt have inevitably ſuffered; and for the miſeries, which your crimes muſt have inflicted, upon your amiable, and innocent wife.

But I do not wiſh again to recal this gloomy proſpect to your view, you may, now, and ought to look forward, to a long train of happineſs; for ſurely, if ſuch a thing is to be found on earth, it muſt ariſe from a conſciouſneſs, of having acted rightly. Who then can be better intitled to it than yourſelf?

As I have found ſome little benefit from theſe waters, I propoſe ſtaying here, ſome time longer—I ſhall then have ſome affairs of conſequence to my fortune, which I have too long neglected, to ſet-

* The *Aſbeſtos*, or *Salamander's wool*.

tle

tle in London. So that I cannot hope to ſee you, at Woodfort, in leſs than two months.

I intreat to hear from you, often, but muſt inſiſt upon your not mentioning the ſubject of our late correſpondence; forget it, Woodville, and be happy!

Your's, ever,

SEYMOUR.

Note, The journal, promiſed by lady Woodville, to lady Straffon, is purpoſely omitted, as it contains nothing more, than an account of ſome of thoſe particulars, that have been already mentioned which happened during the week they ſtaid at York races.

The Editor.

LETTER XLV.

Lady STRAFFON, *To Lady* WOODVILLE.

I Flatter myſelf that this letter will reach Woodfort, ſoon after your arrival there, and that it will find my dear Emily rejoicing in the calm delights of domeſtic happineſs, after the ſcene of hurry and diſſipation, ſhe has ſo lately gone through.

I give you great credit for the lovely picture you have drawn of the marchioneſs, and alſo for the tender concern you expreſs, for the accident that befel her—but I am ſorry your nerves were ſo weak, as to occaſion your fainting.

I allow much for your preſent ſituation, but do not let that, or any thing elſe, my dear ſiſter, ſuffer you to indulge, in an habitual lowneſs of ſpirits. There is an air of languid diſcontent, runs through the latter part of the little journal, you were ſo good to ſend me, that alarms me much—yet I am certain you endeavoured to concealed your ſentiments, even from me; and I approve your caution,

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as I am perſuaded, that by ſpeaking, or writing, on any ſubject that affects us, we ſtrengthen our own feelings of it; and half the ſimple girls who are now pining for love, by murmuring rivulets, or in ſhady groves, would forget the dear objects of their paſſion, if they had not a female confidante, as ſilly as themſelves, to whom they daily recount the fancied charms of their Adonis, and utter vows of everlaſting conſtancy.

But do not, now, my dear Emily, ſo perverſely miſunderſtand me, as to ſuppoſe that I would wiſh you to conceal any thing that diſtreſſes you, from me, or that I ſhould deſire you to let ſorrow prey, in ſilence, on *your heart*, merely to ſave *mine* the pain of ſuffering with you. No, I conjure you to ſpeak freely to me, and if I cannot cure, I will at leaſt ſoothe, your anxiety, if real, and endeavour to laugh you out of it, if imaginary.

We have had a very agreeable viſitor, for theſe ten days paſt, at Straffon Hill—lord Mount Willis.—He lived abroad, chiefly in Italy, theſe ten years; yet is not infected with foreign fopperies, and can reliſh both the food and manners of his native country. Sir John met him laſt, at Paris, from whence he is but juſt returned.

He tells us, that Sir James Miller, and his *cara ſpoſa*, are univerſally ridiculous. Her ladyſhip affects all the lively gallantry, *d'une dame Françoiſe*, but is, unfortunately, encumbered with all the clumſy aukwardneſs of a vulgar Engliſh-woman. Sir James plays deep, and has loſt conſiderably. Lucy ſeems hurt, at the latter part of this account. The goodneſs of her heart is inexhauſtible.

The approach of a certain deſirable event, with that of winter, will, I hope, ſoon afford me the pleaſure of embracing my dear Emily, and her lord. We ſhall return to London, in ten or twelve days. Have you made any diſcovery, in the *terra incognita* of Sir James Thornton's heart? Does Fanny Weſton ſigh in concert with the Æolian lyre? or have the equinoctial blaſts ſo chilled her flame, that ſhe

prefers

prefers a warm room, and chearful company, to lonely meditation, and ſoft ſounds?

How does lady Harriet bear this ſecond inſtance of captain Barnard's perfidy? and how does the poor old gouty knight ſupport the vulgarly called *loſs*, of his deteſtable wife? I find myſelf in a very impertinent mood; and that I may not aſk more queſtions, in one letter, than you may be inclined to anſwer, in two, I ſhall for the preſent, bid you adieu.

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER XLVI.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

YES, my dear Fanny, I am now, thank heaven, ſafely arrived at Woodfort—would I had never left it! I think even the place, and every thing in it, is altered, during a ſhort abſence of twelve days. The trees have loſt their verdure, and the birds ceaſe to ſing. But though the autumnal ſeaſon may have produced theſe effects, I begin to fear there is a greater change in me, than in any of the objects that ſurround me.

Yet am I in the ſpring of life, not ripened even to ſummer; while like a blaſted flower, I ſhrink, and fade. Say, Fanny, why is this? The animal and vegetable world bloom in their proper ſeaſon, youth—while amongſt thoſe whom we call rational, grief ſteals the roſes from the downy cheek, and flowing tears oft dim the brilliant eye. Lord Seymour is unhappy; Thornton ſighs; and my loved lord, ſeems wretched;—need I go on, and cloſe the climax, with my breaking heart!

Chide me, or chide me not, the ſecret's out; I am undone, my ſiſter! in vain lord Woodville ſtrives, beneath the maſque of tenderneſs, to act a part, which he no longer feels; the piercing eyes of

love, detect his coldneſs—his kind attention is all loſt on me, his ſtifled ſighs belie his face and tongue, and whiſper what he ſuffers, when he ſmiles.

O, Fanny! tell me how I have offended him! how loſt that heart, which formed my utmoſt bliſs! let me blot out that paſſage, with my tears; it cannot it muſt not be.—I will not live, if I have loſt his love. Why are you not here, to flatter me—to tell me that my fears are groundleſs, and that he ſighs, from habit, or from chance?

Ah, no! ſince he whom I adore, has failed to blind me, I cannot, if I would, be now deceived. Yet, if I have erred, why does he not ſpeak out, and tell me I have done wrong? Believe me, Fanny, I have tried my heart, examined every hidden thought that's there, and cannot find out one, that ſhould offend him.

Are all men thus inconſtant? I was too young to mark Sir John's behaviour, when you were married firſt. A ſudden ray of hope, now dawns upon me; perhaps the great exertion of my lord's ſpirits, while we remained at York, may have occaſioned a proportionate degree of languor—perhaps he may again recover his natural chearfulneſs, and your poor Emily may again be happy——perhaps——I will ſtrive to hope the beſt.

I have no thoughts of going to London—I always purpoſed lying in at Woodfort—I had flattered myſelf, you would be with me, at that hour of trial; but I do not now expect it—I know Sir John would not conſent to your running the hazard of travelling, in your preſent ſituation, as it has formerly been of ill conſequence to you, I therefore releaſe my dear Fanny, and deſire ſhe may not ſuffer the leaſt anxiety on my account.

I find myſelf much more at eaſe, than when I began this letter, and I muſt affirm, though in contradiction to your opinion, that pouring forth our diſtreſſes, in the boſom of a friend, affords, at leaſt, a tem-

a temporary relief to the afflicted. I am not able to write more at preſent, but will anſwer all your queries by next poſt——

Till then, adieu,

E. WOODVILLE.

LETTER XLVII.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

My dear FANNY,

THERE never ſure was ſuch a man as lord Woodville—he is not only determined to preſerve my affection, but to rob me of the poor conſolation, of complaining that I no longer poſſeſs his. In ſpite of all the pains I have taken, to conceal the anguiſh of my heart, he has certainly perceived it, and by the moſt tender and intereſting converſation, had well nigh led me into a confeſſion, of my being unhappy.

THANK heaven, I ſtopped juſt ſhort of that—had I avowed it, he doubtleſs would have aſked the cauſe, and artfully have drawn me in, at leaſt, tacitly, to reproach his conduct. O never! never, Fanny, can I be capable of that indiſcretion.

BUT were I weak, or mean enough, to do it, I have now no reaſon for complaint—his tenderneſs, politeneſs, and attention, are unabated. No other perſon, but myſelf, could poſſibly perceive the ſmalleſt alteration in his conduct; and I begin to hope, that my apprehenſions have had no other foundation, than an extremity of delicacy, bordering upon weakneſs, in myſelf. A thouſand, nay ten thouſand women, might, and would be happy, with ſuch an amiable, and tender huſband, nor has your Emily a wiſh ungratified, but that of ſeeing her dear lord quite happy.

I AM ſorry to tell you that Sir James Thornton leaves us to morrow; he is to ſet out immediately on the grand tour. My lord has in vain endeavoured to find out the ſource of his melancholy, we can diſcover nothing, but that he is unhappy, which I am ſincerely ſorry for, as he really is the moſt agreeable unaccompliſhed young man, I ever was acquainted with.

Lady Harriet affects to appear thankful for her eſcape from captain Bernard; but finds his elopement a cauſe for ſorrow, on his lady's account. Sir Harry is ſo much enraged, at his ſon's neglect of him, that he begins to be reconciled to his wife's conduct, and ſpeaks of him, with more acrimony, than of her. Indeed, I think Mr. Ransford highly to blame, for refuſing to attend his father, upon ſuch an occaſion.

FANNY Weſton is *à la mort*, at Sir James Thornton's quitting us. That love is the cauſe of her mourning, I well know, but I begin now to apprehend that Sir James, and not lord Seymour, is the object of her paſſion. She has a much better chance in this caſe, than the other, for I am perſuaded if Thornton knew of her affection for him, he would endeavour to make her happy.

ALAS! if he loves another, how impoſſible! I fancy he is enamoured, of one of the miſs Withers's. —His fortune and family are ſuch, that I do not believe he would be rejected; yet I could not wiſh him ſucceſs, for poor Fanny Weſton's ſake.

Men more eaſily triumph over an unhappy paſſion, than women. Diſſipation, change of place, and objects, all contribute to their cure; while perhaps the poor ſighing fair one is abſolutely confined to the ſame ſpot, where ſhe firſt beheld her charmer, and where every object reminds her, that here he ſat, walked, or talked

I am perſuaded there is a great deal more in theſe local memento's, than lovers are willing to allow. I therefore ſhall not oppoſe Fanny Weſton's going to London, if ſhe ſhould again propoſe it.

Sir

Sir William and lady Lawſon are to dine with us, this day.—I will try to muſter all my ſpirits, to receive her. I would not, for the world, make her unhappy, by giving her the leaſt room to ſuſpect, that I am ſo.

Adieu, my deareſt Fanny; to you, and you only, I can, without bluſhing, diſcover all the weakneſs of a heart, that truly, and ſincerely loves you.

E. WOODVILLE.

P. S. I have, this moment, received a meſſage from my lord, to let me know that he ſhall ſpend three or four days, in hunting, with Sir William Atkinſon. I am glad of any thing that can amuſe him.

LETTER XLVIII.

Lady STRATTON, *To Lady* WOODVILLE.

I CANNOT expreſs how much my dear Emily's laſt letters have affected and diſtreſſed me.—Your being unhappy is certainly ſufficient to render me ſo; and what adds to my concern, is, my being abſolutely incapable of affording you the leaſt conſolation, as I am utterly ignorant of the real cauſe of your affliction. I ſometimes think, that it is only a phantom, conjured up by your too delicate apprehenſions; and is, of courſe, merely imaginary.—— At other times, the natural inconſtancy of men alarms me with an idea of Lord Woodville's having met, at York, or elſewhere, ſome object, that may, for a time, divide his heart with you.

Obſerve, my deareſt Emily, that this is mere conjecture;—but we muſt take certain poſitions for granted, before we can reaſon upon any thing. Now do not ſtart, when I tell you, I had much rather your uneaſineſs ſhould ariſe, from the latter

ſource, than the former;—though I ſhould conſider, even a tranſitory alienation of his affection, as a misfortune.

Let us now ſuppoſe this to be the caſe, and then ſee how far you have reaſon to be diſtreſſed, by ſuch an incident. The paſſions of the human mind, are, I fear, as little under our command, as the motions of our pulſe:—you have, therefore, juſt as much reaſon, to reſent your huſband's becoming enamoured of another perſon, as you would have to be offended, at his having a fever.

But if, in conſequence of that delirium, he ſhould ſacrifice your peace to the gratification of his paſſions, by an open and avowed purſuit of the beloved object; or otherwiſe render you unhappy, by unkindneſs, or neglect, you might then have ſome cauſe to complain; but if he be unfortunate enough to feel an unwarrantable paſſion, and keeps that feeling all his own, his merit riſes above humanity, and he ought to become almoſt an object of adoration to you.

Has he not fled from this alluring charmer? Has he not hid his paſſion from the world, nor wounded even your pride? Is not his tenderneſs and kind attention, ſtill unremitted towards you? Indeed, my Emily, allowing theſe to be matters of fact, you owe him more than you can ever pay. Conſider what his regard to you muſt be, that can prevail on him to ſacrifice his paſſion, to your peace?

Then do not, I implore you, my dear child, by even the leaſt appearance of diſtreſs, aggravate his, but be aſſured, that from a heart, where honour is the ruling principle, you have every thing to hope, and that the tranſitory gloom which now affects him, will be ſucceeded by the brighteſt triumph; and that his reaſon and his virtue will both join in ſecuring his affection to you, upon a more ſolid, and permanent foundation, than it could ever have been, if this accident had not happened.

I have

I have gladly laid hold on what you will think the greateſt evil, lord Woodville's having conceived an involuntary paſſion. But formidable as that may appear to you, believe me, Emily, it is of little conſequence, compared to both what he and you muſt ſuffer, ſhould there be found no real cauſe for your diſtreſs. A mind ſo unhappily turned, as yours would then appear to be, muſt be incapable of receiving or adminiſtring content. I am ſhocked at the horrid idea, and will not dwell upon it longer.

As I keep your letters in a particular drawer of my deſk, in looking for your laſt but one, chance preſented me with your firſt letter from Woodfort, where you ſet out a ſtrenuous advocate for the exiſtence of terreſtrial felicity. Fallacious as the opinion may be, I am truly ſorry you have had any reaſon to alter your ſentiments; but let it, at leaſt, conſole you, that if you are not an example of your own argument, there is no ſuch thing as an exception to the general rule, that happineſs is not, nor ever will be, the lot of human nature, till perfection becomes inherent to it.

The ſubjects of this letter, have ſunk my ſpirits, ſo much, that I fear I ſhall rather increaſe, than leſſen your depreſſion, if I purſue them farther. I will, therefore, change to one that ought to give me pleaſure, and will, I hope, afford you ſome.

Lord Mount Willis, thoroughly apprized of our dear Lucy's former attachment to Sir James Miller, has declared a paſſion for her, in the moſt polite and elegant terms, that can be imagined. Senſibility, he ſays, is, with him, the higheſt mark of virtue; and a heart, that could feel what hers has ſuffered, for an unworthy object, muſt be capable of the higheſt tenderneſs for one who can, at leaſt, boaſt the merit of being ſenſible of her charms.

A little falſe delicacy has, as yet, prevented Lucy from declaring her ſentiments, in favour of this charming man, for ſuch, indeed, he is; though I can ſee ſhe likes him full as well, and muſt neceſ-

ſarily approve him much more, than ſhe ever did Sir James Miller.

But Lucy declared ſhe would never marry, and that ſhe would leave her fortune to my Emily.—I know this dwells on her mind, though it never did on mine; for I have as little faith, in the vows of diſappointed love, as in the promiſes of ſucceſsful ones. However, I both hope, and believe, that lord Mount Willis will triumph over her ſcruples, and that I ſhall have the pleaſure of ſeeing her the happy wife, of that very amiable man.

I am ſorry you are to loſe Sir James Thornton; but perhaps the want of his company, may induce lord Woodville to come to London; and I ſhould rejoice at any cauſe that could produce that effect, for I cannot bear the thoughts of your lying-in, in the country.

Fanny Weſton is not of a temper to break her heart for love; but I would, by all means, have her come to town. Her aunt, lady Weſton, talks of going to Bath, next month, and if Fanny chuſes to accompany her, I will anſwer for it, that, that gay ſcene of diſſipation will ſoon conquer an hopeleſs paſſion, whether lord Seymour, or Sir James Thornton be the object.

We arrived in Hill-ſtreet laſt Thurſday; to-morrow, Sir John is to place my little Edward, at Eton. The ſimple mama will feel the loſs of her dear playfellow, but the prudent mother will bleſs the memory of Henry the Sixth, who inſtituted that noble foundation.

The accounts we have received of Sir James Miller, are ſhocking.—He has been obliged to quit Paris, on account of his debts, and is retired into ſome of the provinces.—His lady remains in the capital, living away upon credit, without character. I begin to pity the unhappy man.

You will eaſily perceive that this letter has been written, at different periods. The world breaks in upon me. I am embarked in the ſtream, and

muſt

muſt be hurried away by the current, with ſticks, ſtraws, and a thouſand other inſignificant things.

Adieu, my dear Emily: I hope, ſoon, very ſoon, to ſee you——for, if *the mountain will not come to Mahomet, &c.*

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER XLIX.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

I AM ſincerely ſorry, for having given pain to my dear Fanny's gentle heart, as I cannot ſay that her participation has alleviated my diſtreſs. For giving the fulleſt ſcope to the arguments you have advanced, what do they prove, but that your Emily is unhappy? and that ſhe knew too well, before! You ſet lord Woodville's merits in the faireſt light, cruel Fanny! Why could you not find out ſome fault in him, to make me love him leſs? But it is impoſſible; he is, without diſpute, the moſt amiable of mankind.

I told you, in my laſt, that Sir James Thornton was to leave Woodfort, the day following, which was Tueſday. On Monday night, he took a very polite leave of us all, and I thought appeared more chearful than he had been, for ſome time paſt. When we were at breakfaſt on Tueſday, we were told Sir James had ſet out, at ſix o'clock; and immediately after, my lord's ſervant preſented him with a letter—he appeared to ſhew ſome emotion, while he read it, and ſoon withdrew to his cloſet. In leſs than half an hour, I received the following billet, with the aforeſaid letter, incloſed.

To Lady WOODVILLE.

"I ſhould be unjuſt to my unhappy friend, ſhould "I conceal the noble and generous ſentiments he

" expreſſes, for the moſt lovely, and deſerving of " her ſex; and I ſhould ſtill more highly injure the " unbounded confidence of my dear Emily, ſhould " I prevent her receiving the tribute due to that " merit, which could inſpire ſo truly delicate, and " ſincere a paſſion. I feel I know not what kind of " a mixed ſenſation, for poor Thornton; I both ad- " mire and pity him.

" I would have delivered the incloſed with my " own hand, but feared my preſence might diſtreſs " my Emily, or, perhaps, reſtrain the pity-flow- " ing tear, which, I confeſs, I think his ſuffer- " ings merit.

" Adieu, my deareſt Emily.

" WOODVILLE."

Sir JA. THORNTON, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

" Indebted as I am for many obligations to your " lordſhip, and ſenſibly awake to the warmeſt ſenſa- " tions of gratitude, I could not think of quitting " Woodfort, and England, for ever, without grati- " fying that friendly curioſity, which has ſo often " ſought the cauſe of the too viſible change, in my " manners and appearance. You will, perhaps, be " ſtartled, when I tell you, that this alteration is " owing to yourſelf.

" Ignorant of every refinement, and elegance of " life, diſſipated in my temper, and unattached to any " particular object, by your lordſhip's friendly in- " vitation, I arrived at Woodfort — Heavens! " what a ſcene opened to my aſtoniſhed ſenſe! The " ſudden effect of colours, to a perſon juſt reſtored " to ſight, could not be felt more ſtrongly. Every " object I beheld, was new, was amiable! yet, in " this charming groupe, my lord, there were de- " grees of merit, and my then vacant heart dared " to aſpire, at the moſt perfect of her ſex. Need I " now tell you, that lady Woodville was its choice!

" Yes,

" Yes, I avow it! Paſſion is involuntary; nor would " I, if I could, be cured of mine.

" Yet witneſs for me, heaven, that ſenſual and " abandoned, as my paſt life has been, no groſs " idea ever mixed with hers, nor did her beauteous " form ever raiſe one thought, that even ſhe need " bluſh to hear.

" I do not, my lord, affect to place this purity " of ſentiment, to the account of my own honour, " or even my friendſhip for you. No, I confeſs " myſelf indebted for it, to her charming image, " which ever appeared to my delighted ſenſe, ac- " companied by that uncommon delicacy, that " graces every word, and action, of her ſpotleſs life.— " That, like a ſacred taliſman, has charmed the un- " ruly paſſions of my mind, and made me only feel " the pangs of hopeleſs love.

" Such a confeſſion, as I have now made, my " lord, will, I flatter myſelf, intitle me, both to " your regard, and pity. I go, ſelf-baniſhed, from " all that I eſteem, and love; from you, and lady " Woodville.—It would be the heighth of impiety " to doubt of her happineſs: and a long continuance " of the bleſſings you now enjoy, is the kindeſt wiſh " that I can make for you. Felicity like yours, ad- " mits of no addition.

" When you have read this, my lord, burn, and " forget it, but let not the unhappy writer be to- " tally baniſhed from your remembrance. Conceal " my preſumption, from the too lovely lady Wood- " ville, leſt her reſentment ſhould be added to the " miſeries of,

" Your unhappy friend,

" James Thornton."

O Fanny, I am diſtreſſed beyond meaſure, by theſe two letters! Why did this weak young man place his affections upon me? Why not beſtow them, where they were likely, if not certain, to meet with

with a return? It is ſaid, that love is involuntary; but I believe it is only ſo, in very young, or enervated minds.—If we will not ſtruggle with our paſſions, they will ſurely overcome us; but they may certainly be weeded out, before they have taken too deep root.

I am doubly diſtreſſed, by this unlucky attachment.—Poor Fanny Weſton! her paſſion, for Sir James Thornton is but too viſible;—Would it not be cruel to attempt her cure, by letting her into this ſecret? I know not how to act.—Why did my lord reveal his fooliſh letter? or why did he not ſigh, in ſecret, and conceal his ill-placed love? O theſe audacious men! they dare do any thing.

There is, however, a degree of modeſty, in his keeping the ſecret, while he was here. I am convinced, if he had given the ſlighteſt hint of it, I ſhould have deteſted him: even as it is, I feel myſelf offended, and in a very aukward ſituation. I ſhall certainly bluſh, when I ſee my lord; and yet, why ſhould I be humbled by another perſon's folly? What huſband but mine, would have put ſuch a letter, into the hands of a wife? Such a mark of confidence, ought to raiſe me, in my own opinion, as it is an undoubted proof, that I ſtand high in his. Pleaſing reflection! dwell upon my mind, and baniſh every gloomy thought, that has obtruded there.

As Lucy's happineſs is of infinite conſequence to mine, I hope ſoon to hear, that ſhe is lady Mount Willis.

Your's, as uſual.

E. Woodville.

LET-

LETTER L.

Lady STRAFFON, *To Lady* WOODVILLE.

I CANNOT ſee why my dear Emily ſhould be hurt, or offended, at Sir James Thornton's *innocent* paſſion? had he dared to avow it, to you, it would have loſt *that title*, and ſhould have been conſidered as an inſult; but let the poor youth ſigh in peace, for a few months, and I will venture to promiſe, that he will get the better of his folly—Dying for love is a diſorder, that comes not within our bills of mortality.

Not but I believe that a long and habitual fondneſs founded on reaſonable hopes, will, when deſtroyed, deſtroy life, with it.

" O the ſoft commerce! O the tender ties!
" Cloſe twiſted with the fibres of the heart,
" Which broken break it, and drain off the ſoul
" Of human joy, and make it pain to live."

But theſe are not the ſort of feelings, with which maſters and miſſes, who fancy themſelves in love, are commonly affected; for though youth is the ſeaſon, when we are moſt capable of receiving ſtrong impreſſions, it is alſo the ſeaſon, when they are moſt eaſily eraſed. I think I might venture to pronounce, that there are not five hundred couples, in the cities of London and Weſtminſter, who are married to their firſt love, and yet I firmly believe there are, at leaſt, ten times that number, of happy pairs; if ſo, what becomes of the firſt paſſion?

To be ſure, we, now and then, met with a fooliſh, obſtinate heart, that cheriſhes its own miſery, and preſerves the image of ſome worthleſs object, to the laſt moment of its exiſtence. Among this ſim-

ple

ple claſs, I fear I ſhall be neceſſitated to rank my ſiſter Lucy; for though ſhe does not pretend to have the ſmalleſt objection to lord Mount Willis, yet can ſhe not be prevailed upon, to give a final yes.

His behaviour, on this occaſion, is truly noble; for though I believe that never man was more in love, he has made it a point, both with Sir John, and me, not to preſs Lucy, for her conſent. I fear Sir John will grow angry, at laſt, and, perhaps, hurry her into a denial, which ſhe will have reaſon to repent, all the days of her life.

However, ſhe will now have ſome time to recollect herſelf, as Sir John has, this day, received a ſummons to attend his aunt, lady Aſton, who is dying, and will probably, leave Lucy a large legacy.—That poor idiot, Sir James Miller, has mortgaged the laſt foot of his eſtate; but then he has got rid of his wife.—She died of a fever, at Paris, twelve days ago. Upon the whole, I think fortune has been kinder to him than he deſerved.

I am much pleaſed with lord Woodville's behaviour in regard to the letter; but indeed, my dear, you treat theſe trifling matters much too ſeriouſly; and leſt I ſhould myſelf grow grave upon the ſubject, I ſhall bid you, adieu.

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER LI.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

Dear FANNY,

I Have not been well, theſe three or four days.—Lady Lawſon, who is ſo good to ſtay with me, and all the *ſages femmes*, about me, think that a certain event is nearer, than I apprehended. My lord's foſter ſiſter, who has been brought to bed, about five weeks, is now in the houſe, and every thing is prepared for my *accouchement*.

My

My lord's tenderneſs ſeems doubled, on this occaſion. — He ſcarce ever leaves my apartment; he reads to me, with his eyes oftener fixed on my countenance, than the book, and ſeems to watch every change in my looks. — What a wretch I have been, Fanny! to ſuſpect this amiable man, of want of love? Would it not be ſinning againſt him, yet more highly, to let him know my crime, by aſking his forgivenneſs, for my unjuſt ſuſpicions?

No, I will bluſh in ſilence, and humble myſelf before heaven, and you, who alone are conſcious of my folly.—Pardon, thou great firſt author of my happineſs! and thou dear parent-ſiſter, guardian of my youth, excuſe my weakneſs, that had well nigh daſhed the cup of bleſſing from me, or mingled it with bitterneſs, for ever!

I hear my dear lord's tuneful voice inquiring for his Emily? I come, my love!

Adieu, my deareſt ſiſter,

E. WOODVILLE.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.
[With the foregoing letter.]

"JOY to my dear lady Straffon, to Sir John, "to miſs Straffon, and to all who love my Emily! "I have the tranſport to inform you, that ſhe has "made me the happy father of a lovely boy! and "is herſelf as well as her ſituation can admit. My "ſiſter Lawſon, lady Harriet, and miſs Weſton, "join in congratulations, and compliments to you, "with your ever affectionate

"WOODVILLE."

Note, The letters from lady Straffon, that immediately follow this, contain only congratulations, and minute inquiries about her ſiſter's, and nephew's health; and as they are, by no means, intereſting, the editor thinks it better to omit them, and return to the correſpondence between lord Seymour, and lord Woodville.

LET-

LETTER LII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

My dear SEYMOUR.

I Have been at home, now, above a week, yet, have purpoſely avoided writing to you, as your laſt interdicted me from mentioning the only ſubject, of which I am capable of thinking. O Seymour! it is in vain to diſguiſe it; my head, and heart, are filled with her alone! Upon the exertion of any painful act of virtue, we flatter ourſelves that we have abſolutely conquered its oppoſite vice, or weakneſs; our vanity triumphs, and like the *French*, we frequently chant out *Te Deum*, without having gained a victory.

Too much I feel that this has been my caſe. I begin to fear, that I ſhall not even be capable of diſguiſing my unhappineſs; and of practiſing this diſſimulation, which, in my ſingular ſituation, ſhould be deemed a virtue.

I have diſcovered that lady Woodville has lately wept much; I once ſurprized her alone, in a flood of tears. I could not bear them: they reproached me, Seymour! but it was with ſilent anguiſh. I preſſed to know the cauſe of her diſtreſs: had ſhe revealed it, and but once upbraided me, though in the gentleſt terms, I fear I ſhould have thrown away the maſk, avowed my paſſion, and quitted her, for ever.

But her ſoft nature knew not how to chide, and ſeemed alarmed for fear ſhe had offended. Her ſuffering gentleneſs unmanned me quite, or rather, on the inſtant, it reſtored all that is worthy of the name of man, my reaſon, and my virtue: and I dare hope, that, from that time, ſhe has been well deceived, and that I only am the victim of my own weakneſs.

I ſhall

I ſhall addreſs this letter to London; I think it is more likely that it ſhould meet you, there, at preſent, than at the hot wells. I intreat you will wait upon the marchioneſs, and tell her, Seymour, what my heart endures; let me, at leaſt, have ſome merit, from the ſacrifice I have made, and not be deemed ungrateful, or inſenſible, by her.

If you hear any thing of Ransford, let me know it.—His father is outrageous at his conduct, and even I think he is much to blame.

Adieu, my valued friend,

WOODVILLE.

LETTER LIII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

I Am ſincerely ſorry for your relapſing into a ſtate of weakneſs, which muſt be always a ſtate of miſery. I confeſs I thought you in the ſureſt train for happineſs, as the having conquered ourſelves, is the only ſubject I know, for real exultation. But as your conduct has been truly noble, and that no perſon has ſuffered, from what I now conſider, as your *own* misfortune, no one can have a right, to reproach you; and it is for your own ſake, alone, that I now intreat you to ſtruggle with your too partial attachment to an unworthy woman.

You deſire me to acquaint her with the ſtate of your heart; can you ſuppoſe me ſo weak, as to comply with your requeſt, were it within my power? But I muſt travel ſome miles, to afford the fugitive conqueror the triumph you deſigned. — She ſet out from London, five days ago, with your friend Ransford. I hear they intend to make the tour of Italy,

Italy, together. Proſperous gales, and calm ſeas, attend them!

You ſee when a lady is bent upon travelling, ſhe can eaſily ſupply herſelf with a *Ciciſbeo*; and I fancy that Ransford will be a much more agreeable companion, upon this party, than your lordſhip could poſſibly have been.—He carries not the ſtings of remorſe, about him, the bane of joy, or peace! neglect of his father, may ſometimes, poſſibly, cloud his gaiety, but one glance from the bright eyes of the marchioneſs, will quickly diſpel the gloom.

Will you forgive me for owning that I am tranſported at their union? Would to heaven, that you could receive joy from it, alſo! Had ſhe fallen lower than ſhe has done, it might have mortified your pride; but if you can diveſt yourſelf of ſelf-love, you muſt allow that Ransford is more calculated for a lover, than you are. I think he bows with a better grace, ſings charmingly, dances ſuperlatively well, is more *adroit* in his perſon, is above an inch taller, and has ten times your vivacity.

I both hope, and believe, that they are married; and as Ransford does not want penetration, he may poſſibly have diſcovered your attachment to her; he will, therefore, probably, prevent her returning to England, for ſome years. Let her but keep out of your way, and I care not what becomes of her.

Do, my dear Woodville, let me congratulate your eſcape from that *Circe!* and rejoice with you in the amiable character of her, whom Providence has deſigned to bleſs your future days!

I have buſineſs that will detain me in London, for this month to come; the moment that is finiſhed, I will fly to Woodfort, and hope to find you, and every one there, as happy as they ought to be; to wiſh for more were vain.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LIV.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

HOW could my cruel friend attempt to jeſt with miſery like mine! It is impoſſible!—It muſt not, cannot be! the marchioneſs gone off with Ransford! by heaven, it is falſe, though thou, my deareſt, trueſt friend, aver it! You thought to cure my paſſion, by this legend; but you have blown the ſleeping embers, to a flame; and honeſt indignation, for the injury ſhe ſuſtains, adds fuel to the fire.

Ransford! why Ransford knew her not, ſix weeks ago.—Their firſt meeting was at York.—He muſt have ſeen her paſſion.—She could not diſguiſe it; nay, I know ſhe would not—ſhe is above diſguiſe.

Why, Seymour, ſhould you treat me like a child, and ſtrive to impoſe impoſſibilities upon me? how can a heart, that has felt what yours has done, ſport with a lover's anguiſh? I am impatient till I ſend off this, that by the meſſenger, you may reſtore my peace, and clear her honour. O! you have ſet my boſom all on fire! be quick, and quench the blaze, leſt it conſume the innocent cauſe of all my wretchedneſs, along with your diſtracted friend.

WOODVILLE.

P. S. The ſervant, who carries this, muſt neither ſleep, or eat, till he brings back your anſwer. I ſhall do neither, till I receive it. For pity ſake, my friend, trifle no farther, but at once relieve, and excuſe the diſtraction, you have cauſed.

LET.

LETTER LV.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

WELL mayeſt thou call thyſelf diſtracted, Woodville! and I, as ſuch, can pity, and forgive thee.—Yet muſt I not become infected by thy folly, and treat thee like a wayward child, indeed.

As I would not have deſcended to a falſhood, even to have cured you of your weakneſs, for I cannot call it paſſion, ſo neither ſhall I ſooth you, now, by contradicting the truth that I have already aſſerted; and however impoſſible, it may appear to you, that the marchioneſs ſhould ſo quickly enter into any engagements with Ransford, it is moſt certain, that they left London, in the ſame poſt-chaiſe, on monday ſe'ennight, and that ſhe declared her intention of viſiting Italy, to my ſiſter Sandford, who was extremely ſcandalized at her behaviour, with regard to Mr. Ransford, during the ſhort time ſhe ſtaid in town, ſince they returned from York.

Be aſſured that I am ſincerely affected by the miſerable condition of your mind.—I cannot help conſidering you as in a ſtate of faſcination; for if your reaſon could operate at all, you could not poſſibly be aſtoniſhed, that a woman, who had jilted you four years ago, and preferred age and diſeaſe to you, when ſhe profeſſed to love you, and when it was in your power to marry her, ſhould abandon you now, that ſhe cannot be your wife, for a lively, agreeable man, who is, probably, as much enamoured of her, though not quite ſo romantic as your lordſhip.

As you are not, at preſent, in a ſituation to receive any benefit, from the admonitions of friendſhip, I ſhall reſerve my ſentiments for a fitter occaſion,

ſion, and not detain your ſervant longer, than while I ſubſcribe myſelf Still yours.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LVI.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

YES, Seymour, I will own I have been mad; I wake as from a dream: yet why, my kind, my cruel friend, have you recovered me from that delirium, which, like an opiate, while it weakened, ſoothed my enfeebled ſenſe, and left me ſcarce a wiſh, to ſtruggle with my malady? Yes, ſhe is gone! my friend repeats it, and it muſt be true!

Married to Ransford! Can I yet believe it? "O may the furies light their nuptial torch!" Diſſembling, cruel woman! ſhe ſaw the anguiſh of my breaking heart, when honour triumphed over my ſelf-love, and prevented my acccepting the ſacrifice ſhe offered, to her deſtruction.

Perhaps, that ſtung her pride; perhaps, ſhe loves me ſtill, but could not bear to be rejected by me. —Perhaps, I have undone her peace, as ſhe has mine.——O no! a younger, gayer, newer lover, abſorbs all thoughts of me! I am forgotten, and I will forget

——not Iſabelle! my life, my ſoul, my love!

Do not deteſt me, Seymour; I would, but cannot conquer this diſeaſe.

The moment I had ſent off Williams, with my laſt to you, I ordered my horſes, and rode off thirty miles, towards London, not only to be ſo much nearer the return of my expreſs, but to prevent lady Woodville from obſerving my diſtraction.

When I had got about five miles from Woodfort, I ſent back my ſervant, to let her know, that I ſhould ſpend three or four days, in hunting, with Sir William

liam Atkinſon, whom I juſt then met, going up to London.

I had ſettled my plan with Williams, who returned, even quicker, than I thought it poſſible. I have now ſpent three days at a wretched inn, where, were it in my choice, I would remain, for ever. Here I can curſe, and I can weep—but the innocent lady Woodville may be rendered unhappy, by my ſtay.—She loves me, as I loved the ——— Let me not name her.

Sir James Thornton leaves us, in a few days. I muſt return to Woodfort.—O write ſoon! and once more ſay, you pity and forgive,

Your's, ever,

WOODVILLE.

LETTER LVII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

I Write to you, merely becauſe you deſire it; for I am well convinced, that nothing which I, or the greateſt philoſopher that ever exiſted, could ſay to you, would have any effect upon your mind, in its preſent ſtate; and my own is, at this inſtant, ſo extremely agitated, that I am ſcarce capable of writing at all.

I have, this day, received a letter, from captain Beaumont.—The contents will amaze you. About ſix weeks ago, the acknowledged ſon of madame de Beaumont, was taken ill of the ſmall pox; and as her daughter had never had it, the general, and ſhe thought proper to ſend her to a friend's houſe, leſt her beauty ſhould be endangered by the infection.

This young lady, now about fifteen, who had never been out of her mothers's ſight before, happened, in the family ſhe was placed in, to become acquainted

quainted with a young muſqueteer, handſome, and accompliſhed, but without rank or fortune. They quickly became enamoured of each other; and, at the end of a fortnight, eloped together, and got ſafe into Holland. They might, poſſibly, have been overtaken, and prevented from marrying, if the lady, to whoſe care Maria Beaumont was entruſted, had not dreaded the violence of madame de Beaumont's temper, ſo much that ſhe did not dare to inform her, of the misfortune, till it was paſt remedy.

In the mean time, the young, and by all accounts, amiable, heir of the family expired, in his father's arms. The violent agitation, of madame de Beaumont's mind threw her into a raging fever.—During her delirium, ſhe raved inceſſantly, on the ingratitude and baſeneſs of Maria, and her own inhumanity to the unhappy Charlotte.

The general, who now conſidered himſelf as childleſs, gladly laid hold on the opportunity of endeavouring to recover thoſe, he had formerly, *not loſt*, but *thrown away*—he therefore prevailed on madame de Beaumont, to ſee Charlotte. He went himſelf to the convent, and having declared his hitherto concealed affinity to Charlotte, he obtained leave from the abbeſs, to let her viſit her dying mother.

But no tongue or pen can expreſs the various emotions, of ſurprize, grief, and joy, which were occaſioned by the ſight of his lovely daughter, when ſhe caſt herſelf at his feet, to receive his benediction.—Like poor old Lear he would have knelt to her, and begged forgiveneſs.

But when ſhe preſented herſelf on her knees, by the bedſide of madame de Beaumont, the unhappy woman, unable to ſuſtain the ſight of ſo much injured beauty, fainted quite away; but the moment ſhe was recovered to her reaſon, ſhe called for Charlotte, and never let her quit her ſight, or ceaſed to pour forth bleſſings on her, and implore her pardon, till ſhe expired.

Before ſhe died, ſhe intreated Charlotte to quit the convent, and remain with her unhappy father, while

while he lived. She desired that a dispensation from her vows, might be immediately solicited from the Pope, and that captain Beaumont, and lord Seymour might be sent for, in order to obtain their forgiveness. But only one of her wishes, was accomplished. — Captain Beaumont arrived, about two hours before her death; she saw, and blessed him.

He writes me word, that neither his father, nor himself, can prevail on Charlotte, to think of returning into the world again; but that she has consented to go into the country with them, for a couple of months, merely in hopes of reconciling the general, to his youngest daughter. He desires me to *fly* to Bellevüe, that I may at least see his sister, before she is again secluded from the world for ever.

O Woodville! I want but *wings*, to obey him! But, hark, my chariot wheels rattle, and my impatient heart, much more than beats responsive to the horses feet.

Adieu, adieu, my friend.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LVIII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

I Know not whether to congratulate, or condole, with my dear Seymour, on the very extraordinary events, that have happened, in the Beaumont family. His feelings, I know, must arise from those of his beloved Charlotte; and I am, at present, doubtful, whether she will ever again recover, in the same degree, that peaceful resignation, which we may suppose she had acquired, and was in full possession of, a few weeks ago.

All the passions, of that gentle nature, must now be roused to tumult; the sight of her dear Seymour must

muſt give her joy, tranſporting joy! which is as much an enemy to peace, as the moſt poignant miſery. And yet, again, muſt ſhe be torn from all the ſocial ties of human life; again be buried in that *quick* ſepulchre, a convent!

Do not, my friend, indulge a ſingle thought of her returning back, into the world.—It cannot be: Charlotte Beaumont will not be prevailed upon, even by the man ſhe loves, to break her vows to heaven: for though I believe her poſſeſſed of the moſt exalted virtue, ſhe cannot, poſſibly, be free from ſuperſtition, as ſhe is both a woman, and a catholick.

You will, perhaps, be ſurprized at my writing to you in this ſtrain; but I would wiſh you to guard your heart againſt its greateſt foe, againſt ſelf-deluſion, Seymour! that ſly, ſlow, underminer of our reaſon, and our peace! that, lying, whiſpered to my weak preſumption, I might behold the marchioneſs, unmoved! Fatal, fatal error! it has undone me, Seymour! But I will think, I mean ſpeak, of her, no more.

I have an anecdote to tell you, which convinces me, that Adam's curſe is intailed on all his offſpring.

——— ——— ——— "For either,
"He never ſhall find out fit mate, but ſuch
"As ſome misfortune brings him, or miſtake;
"Or whom he wiſhes moſt, ſhall ſeldom gain,
"Through her perverſeneſs; but ſhall ſee her gained,
"By a far worſe; or, if ſhe loves, withheld
"By parents; or, his happieſt choice, too late
"Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound,
"To a fell adverſary, his hate, or ſhame:
"Which infinite calamity ſhall cauſe
"To human life, and houſhold peace confound."

Thornton quitted Woodfort, three days ago.—— The morning he went off, he left a letter for me, which contained an abſolute declaration of the moſt

ardent paſſion for lady Woodville! You may, perhaps, think he was a little out, in the choice of a confidant—by no means, I aſſure you. I incloſed his letter immediately to my wife, and felt myſelf really concerned for his misfortune. Emily is certainly capable of inſpiring the moſt delicate paſſion; Thornton was a ſecond Cymon, when he firſt ſaw her; and I may with great truth ſay, that with all the beauties of an Iphigene, ſhe is poſſeſſed of every amiable virtue that can inſpire eſteem and reſpect.—I would give millions to change paſſions with him.

I can ſcarce hope to hear from you, while the charming delirium of your happineſs laſts; but when you return again to reaſon and miſery, I ſhall then be a proper companion for your affliction. But in every ſituation of life I ſhall remain unalterably,

Your's,

WOODVILLE.

LETTER LIX.

Lady STRAFFON, *To La'y* WOODVILLE,

AS my dear Emily may yet be conſidered as an invalid, I think myſelf bound to write every day, and every thing that can poſſibly contribute to her amuſement, without expecting or waiting for any acknowledgment of my letters.

Sir John returned laſt night, from paying his laſt duty to his aunt, lady Aſton, and very well ſhe has paid him for his attendance. She has bequeathed to him the pleaſant manor of Aſhfield, which is worth between eight and nine hundred pounds a year; and made him her reſiduary legatee, when he has paid her bequeſts, of twelve thouſand pounds to Lucy, a thouſand pounds a-piece, to my children, and ſome few legacies to old ſervants.

As ſoon as Sir John had acquinted us with this agreeable news, he aſked Lucy, if ſhe was yet determined, with regard to lord Mount Willis? when, to my great pleaſure and ſurprize, ſhe anſwered, Yes, I think I ſhall be ready to give him my hand before this day ſe'nnight; though I cannot poſitively fix the day, as lawyers are dilatory folks.

Sir John then began to rally her, on what he imagined to be her attention to ſettlements, &c. and told her that my lord and he would take care of all thoſe matters, without her aſſiſtance.—She anſwered, with a very ſtedfaſt countenance and determined air, You will pardon me, brother; for once, and only once, in my life, I am reſolved to act for myſelf.—Now hear my reſolution, which I deſire you will communicate to lord Mount Willis tomorrow morning.

When his lordſhip did me the honour to addreſs me, I had then but five thouſand pounds, a fortune much too ſmall to be an object of conſideration, to him; but neither he nor you knew, at that time, that I had but a uſe, even in that ſmall ſum, for life.

Sir John attempted to interrupt her, by inquiring what ſhe meant? ſhe begged that he would ſuffer her to proceed without interruption, and went on.—The ſevere treatment I met with, from Sir James Miller, made me, at that time, reſolve, that I would never marry.—We little know our own hearts in many particulars of life; but leaſt of all, in this.

But the extreme kindneſs I met with, at the ſame time, from lady Straffon, laid me under ſuch indelible obligations, as no time nor circumſtance can ever efface. I then determined, nay declared, that I would bequeath my fortune to my niece Emily; and no power on earth ſhall make me alter my reſolution.

From my aunt's unmerited goodneſs to me, it is now in my power to fulfil my intentions before my death, and to give a proof of that gratitude, which I owe to my more than ſiſter. Again both Sir John

and I would have broken in on her diſcourſe, but ſhe beckoned ſilence.

When this, the firſt wiſh of my heart, is accompliſhed, I ſhall ſtill have a much better fortune than lord Mount Willis firſt expected with me.—But it muſt not be all his. Sir James Miller has been in ſome degree conducive to that happineſs, which I expect and hope for, from an union with his lordſhip. Sir James is poor and wretched; juſtly puniſhed for his crimes, but not rewarded, for the benefits he has conferred on me.—Some ſmall proviſion muſt be made for him, without his ever knowing from whom he receives it. I formerly looked upon him with horror and averſion; I now conſider him as my benefactor; and the ſaving him from the miſeries of extreme poverty, will relieve my mind from a ſort of mental debt.

Sir John could forbear no longer, but claſping her in his arms, ſaid, Providence had made him rich, indeed, when it beſtowed ſuch treaſures on him, as his wife and ſiſter. Both he and I ſaid every thing to diſſuade her, from her intended gift to Emily, but in vain.

Sir John ſeemed to hint, as if he thought it would be better, that her generous intentions towards Sir James Miller, ſhould be executed by lord Mount Willis, rather than herſelf. By no means, brother, replied Lucy; were there a remain of tenderneſs for him, in my heart, the world ſhould not bribe me, to marry its ſole lord. Generoſity ſhould flow from principle, not paſſion; and, as I can truly boaſt that this action, with regard to Sir James Miller, ariſes from the firſt ſource, nothing muſt change the current of it. My conduct, on this occaſion, is, I think, the higheſt compliment that I can pay to lord Mount Willis, and I have not a doubt of his conſidering it, in that light.

We both acquieſced in her opinion, and Sir John waited on lord Mount Willis, this morning, to inform him of Lucy's intentions. He ſays he never ſaw any perſon ſo tranſported as his lordſhip; he ſaid

he

he had ever looked upon Lucy, as the moſt amiable of women, but that her generoſity to Sir James Miller, made him now look up to her, as to a ſuperior being; and that if ſhe gave thouſands, he ought to give ten thouſands, to the unhappy man, who had been in any degree inſtrumental to his felicity.

This will be a whimſical conteſt, I think, Emily, but I do not fancy that Lucy will conſent to my lord's interfering with her deſigns. At preſent, ſhe intends to lay out four thouſand pounds, in an annuity for Sir James; which if he continues to live abroad, may ſupport him decently.

I have been this day to beſpeak a pair of diamond ſhoe buckles, and a very fine egrette, which Sir John and I mean to preſent her with. I know lord Mount Willis's family jewels are very rich, but my dear Lucy's virtues will outſhine them all.—Indeed ſhe is an honour, not only to her ſex, but to human nature!

She joins with me, in intreating yours, and lord Woodville's company, at her wedding. Surely my Emily will not refuſe us both! you can have no doubts but that your little boy will be taken every poſſible care of, and even a little month's abſence, from that dear face, on which your dotage hangs, will make an amazing change for the better, in it—He will be as handſome again, by the time you return to Woodfort.

Lucy writes this night to lady Harriet and Fanny Weſton, to attend her nuptials.—All girls will fly to a wedding, ſo that you will be left totally alone, if you are ſo ill-natured as to deny our requeſt.

Who knows what a good example may do?—The penſive lady Harriet may perhaps be prevailed upon to ſigh no more for her perjured ſwain, but may poſſibly be inclined to make ſome worthy man happy. As to Fanny Weſton, I am perſuaded that the feſtivity of a wedding will intirely conquer her hopeleſs paſſion for the wandering Thornton. She is no Penelope, believe me; and I fancy Mr. Willis,

my lord's bother, will be able to baniſh the errant knight quite of her mind.

Adieu, my dear Emily. I hope you will make me happy in your next, by telling me that I ſhall ſoon have the pleaſure of ſeeing you. Indeed I want nothing elſe at preſent to compleat my felicity.

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER LX.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

My dear FANNY,

I am extremely charmed, but not ſurprized, at Lucy's conduct -- There is every thing to be expected from *ſenſibility and delicacy* joined; but, indeed, I have ſcarce ever known them ſeparated in a female heart. Refined manners are the natural conſequences of fine feelings, which will, even in an untutored mind, form a ſpecies both of virtue, and good breeding, higher than any thing that is to be acquired, either in courts or ſchools; but when theſe *two qualities* receive every addition, that education and example can beſtow,

" When youth makes ſuch bright objects ſtill more bright,
" And fortune ſets them in the ſtrongeſt light;
" 'Tis all of Heaven that we below may view,
" And all but adoration is their due."

Thus do I think of our dear Lucy; yet I muſt ſay that ſhe has been uncommonly fortunate, in having ſuch an opportunity of exerting the noble qualities of her heart, and proving how much ſuperior ſhe is to the deteſtable meanneſs of malice or revenge.

venge. Charming girl! may ſhe be as happy as ſhe deſerves!

She, as well as you, has intreated me to partake happineſs.—Alas, Fanny! though grief is contagious, we cannot always ſympathize with joy—ſtrange perverſeneſs of our natures, that accepts the evil, and rejects the good! Do not, from this, ſuſpect me of malevolence, or ſuppoſe that I do not truly rejoice in Lucy's felicity. But there is, I know not why, a kind of weight, that hangs upon my mind, which I find it impoſſible to remove. Perhaps, change of place, may help to ſhake it off.—Be that as it may, I ſhall certainly comply with your's, and Lucy's requeſt.

My lord has kindly promiſed to accompany me, and our ſweet little babe is to be left at lady Lawſon's. Indeed, Fanny, you ſcarce can think what a ſacrifice I make, to quit him for a day; but he will be under the protection of the beſt of women.

I fear there is a ſcene preparing, that will trouble her repoſe. That bad miſs Fanning! what a heart muſt hers be? how void of gratitude! and where that virtue is wanting, there can ſubſiſt no other.—Neither precept nor example can operate on baſe minds.

Is it not ſtrange, that nature ſhould vary ſo much in the human genus, as to create a Lucy Straffon, and a Mary Fanning! ſo nearly of the ſame age too; both deſcended from good families; and both well educated. The animal creation do not differ thus from their own ſpecies. There are no furious ſheep, nor mild tigers.—Nature is uniform, in all her works, but man.—Hapleſs variety! ſad ſource of miſery! the tiger and the lamb are not leſs ſimilar, than the betrayer, and betrayed—yet both wear the ſame form, and only by experience, is the difference found.—Nay, ſometimes, we have ſeen the faireſt face conceal the vileſt heart; as lurks the ſerpent underneath the roſe.—This is a mortifying ſubject; I will no more of it.

Fanny Weſton, as you gueſſed, is in high ſpirits, at the idea of Lucy's wedding.--She talks of nothing but dreſs, equipage, and jewels, ever ſince it has been mentioned—but a new ſubject is of infinite uſe in the country; and I do not know whether a great funeral would not have entertained her, quite as much.—Nodding plumes, and painted eſcutcheons will amuſe the imagination, when gilt coaches and gay liveries do not come in the way.—

Happy trifler! how I envy her—yet I am ſure ſhe loves Lucy, and fancies that ſhe is really enamoured of Sir James Thornton too.—I am certain, that lady Harriet would gladly be excuſed from going to London, but I will not ſeem to ſee which way her inclinations tend.

" The ſilent heart, which grief aſſails,
" Treads ſoft, and loneſome, o'er the vales.
" Sees daiſies open, rivers run,
" And ſeeks, as I have vainly done,
" Amuſing thought; but learns to know,
" That ſolitude's the nurſe of woe."

And a ſoft, and tender nurſe it is—but diſſipation may, perhaps, be good for us all, and lady Harriet ſhall try the recipé, as well as

Your affectionate, &c.

E. WOODVILLE.

LETTER LXI.

Lady STRAFFON, *To Lady* WOODVILLE.

I Think myſelf extremely obliged to my dear Emily, for her compliance with her friends requeſt.—You cannot conceive what delightful effects the hopes of ſeeing you have produced in Hill-ſtreet.—Sir John talks of nothing elſe, but the *ſparkler*; you know he uſed to call you ſo.—Lucy is all gratitude

titude for your kindneſs, and my little Emily holds up her head moſt amazingly, that her aunt may obſerve what a fine carriage ſhe has, and how much ſhe is grown, ſince ſhe ſaw her.—The ſervants are all tranſported with double joy for Lucy's wedding, and your arrival. In ſhort, every one wears a ſmiling face, and I ſhall not pardon it, if there ſhould appear the ſmalleſt trace of gloom on your's.

I am very ſorry for what you hint at, with regard to Lady Lawſon—but be aſſured, that a woman ſhould be thoroughly convinced, not only of her huſband's attachment, but of his morals alſo, before ſhe introduces a female inmate, younger, though perhaps not fairer than herſelf.

The caution ſhould be equally attended to, with regard to male intimates.—I have ſeldom known an habitual friendſhip, that did not kindle, into what is called love, where there have been youth, beauty, and unceaſing opportunity, to fan the flame.

I think, if I were in Lady Lawſon's caſe, I ſhould not feel much—for the heart of a man who is capable of ſeducing a young creature, that is immediately under his protection, can never be worth regretting. I have always heard, that Sir William is a very debauched man; and a truly delicate woman cannot preſerve her affection, for ſuch a one, long.—Contempt muſt follow vice; and where we once deſpiſe, we ſoon muſt ceaſe to love.

Nor do I look upon miſs Fanning as an object of pity—bred up, as ſhe has been, with ſo excellent a woman, one ſhould ſuppoſe her heart replete with every virtue;—but ſhe cannot, poſſibly, be poſſeſſed even of the common merits, which we expect from a chambermaid, when ſhe can deſcend to proſtitution, without temptation.

Had ſhe been led aſtray by an agreeable young man, I could have pitied, nay, perhaps, have loved, and even eſteemed her; for I am not ſuch an Amazon, in ethics, as to conſider a breach of chaſtity, as the higheſt crime that a woman can be guilty of; though it is certainly, the moſt unpardonable folly;

and I believe there are many women, who have erred, in that point, who may have more real virtue, aye, and delicacy too, than half the ſainted dames who value themſelves on the preſervation of their chaſtity; which, in all probability, has never been aſſailed. She alone who has withſtood the ſolicitations of a man ſhe fondly loves, may boaſt her virtue; and I will venture to ſay, that ſuch an heroine will be more inclined to pity, than deſpiſe the unhappy victims of their own weakneſs.

I have ſported my opinion upon this ſubject very freely; you muſt therefore allow me to explain myſelf more clearly. I know your delicacy will be hurt if I do not; and I may expect to be ſeverely attacked by my dear little prude.

Firſt then, I confine my fair penitents to their firſt choice; a ſecond error of this ſort is never to be pardoned.—Paſſion is the only excuſe that can poſſibly be made for ſuch a tranſgreſſion; and a woman who has made ſuch a ſacrifice to love alone may be perfectly ſatisfied, that ſhe can never be ſubject to that paſſion in the ſame degree again. For there never is above one human creature that we can love *better than ourſelves.*

The woman who receives two gallants, is in my mind, quite upon a footing with the moſt venal beauties; whoſe capacious hearts ſcorn to be limited to any number. All married ladies I abſolutely exclude, from my order of amiable unfortunates—they cannot even pretend to be deceived;—whereas a ſimple girl, however mean her condition, may flatter herſelf, that her lover's intentions are honourable. Old legends tell of king Cophetua, and the beggar maid; and your Pamelas, and your Mariannes, encourage hope in young untutored minds, which perhaps the artful deſtroyer takes the utmoſt pains to encreaſe; "till they can truſt, and he be-"tray no more."

This is I confeſs a nice ſubject for a woman to treat upon; but I promiſe you I will endeavour to make my girl diſtinguiſh between vice and weakneſs;

neſs; and I hope while ſhe deteſts the one, ſhe will be always ready to pity, and if in her power to protect the other. —— There is no character I ſo heartily abominate as that of the *outrageouſly virtuous*. I have ſeen a lady render herſelf hateful to a large company by repeating, perhaps a forged tale of ſome unhappy frail one, with ſuch a degree of rancour and malevolence, as is totally inconſiſtent with the calm dignity of real virtue.

Have you ever read a fable, which is bound up with Mr. Moore's, but was written by Mr. Brooke, called the female ſeducers? I think it the prettieſt thing, that ever was written upon this ſubject.—To that I refer you for my ſentiments at large.

Your remark upon the diverſity of natures, amongſt the human ſpecies, is pretty and ingenious;—but when we conſider the amazing variety there is in the animal creation, and how many of them are noxious, we cannot wonder that there ſhould be ſome difference in human kind. Had we been all formed with equal virtues, thoſe very virtues would have been rendered uſeleſs;—an inſipid tameneſs would have prevented emulation, and life would have become a perfect ſinecure.

On the other hand, were we all vicious, diſorder and confuſion muſt take place, and this world be quickly reduced to its primitive chaos. Without temptation, there could be no virtue; and without virtue, this world could not ſubſiſt.—We ſhould not be ſo much pleaſed with the gentleneſs of the lamb, if there was no animal more fierce, nor ſhould we feel the ſweetneſs of the woodlark's note, ſo ſenſibly as we do, if we had never heard the ſcreech-owl's voice, or the croaking of the raven. It is by compariſon alone, that we are capable of eſtimating good and evil, both in the moral and natural ſenſe.

I could illuſtrate my argument, as fully amongſt our own ſpecies, as in the brute creation; but I have drawn this letter to ſuch an immoderate length, that I muſt at leaſt defer the remainder of my diſcourſe, parſon-like, to another opportunity.

Every

Every thing is ſettled to Lucy's mind; and lord Mount Willis's happy day is fixed for Saturday fortnight. I hope you will come to town next week; till then,

Adieu, my ever dear Emily.

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER LXII.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

Dear FANNY,

I Should have anſwered your letter by laſt poſt, but was prevented, by having company. The two miſs Withers's ſpent three days with us.—I told you before, they were charming women; but agreeable, as I firſt thought them, I now think them ten times more ſo.

The eldeſt is extremely ſenſible, and perfectly accompliſhed, but of a grave turn; the youngeſt has every merit of her ſiſter, with the moſt engaging vivacity imaginable. She is ſoon to be married to an Iriſh noblman.—Happy man, who is to be bleſſed with ſuch a companion!

She ſeems to feel ſome regret at the thoughts of quitting her friends and England; but ſays, ſhe is ſure that her lord will be ſo good to let her viſit them ſometimes; and ſhe would, by no means, wiſh to detach him intirely from his native country, or prevent his ſpending that fortune in it, which he derives from it.

Miſs Withers is to go to Ireland, with her ſiſter. I am almoſt ſorry that I ever was acquainted with theſe ſweet girls, ſince I am to loſe the pleaſure of their ſociety ſo ſoon. They told me a piece of news, which though it ſurprized, did not diſpleaſe me.—Mr. Ransford is married to the marchioneſs of St. Aumont, and they are now in France together.

Is

Is it not odd, that my lord never mentioned this particular, as it is no ſecret in the country? and he muſt certainly know it, as he has been once or twice to ſee Sir Harry Ransford. But I think you deſired me never to pry into his motives for any thing; and I obey.

Indeed, Fanny, you appear to me to affect the ſtoic too much, from what you ſay about lady Lawſon; but we can all bear the misfortunes of others, with great fortitude,

"When they are laſh'd, we kiſs the rod,
"Reſigning to the will of God."

In my mind, lady Lawſon's trial is a fiery one.—She is, ſhe muſt be, doubly diſtreſſed. As to the ſlight infidelities of huſbands, I think the wife muſt be contemptible, who reſents them; but every woman, that truly loves her huſband, wiſhes to preſerve his heart; and a conſciouſneſs of his attachment to another object, muſt be productive of the moſt poignant anguiſh. Happy, happy ſiſter! that have never felt that "Hydra of calamity."

I grant that Sir William Lawſon has ever been a debauched man, but he has always had, except in this inſtance, ſo much regard to his lady, to decency and humanity, as to conceal his vices from her: He, therefore, had not forfeited her eſteem, though ſhe had loſt his love.—O loſs beyond repair! Then her affection for that wretch, miſs Fanning, muſt add to her diſtreſs. Not having been bleſſed with children, ſhe looked upon this worthleſs girl, as her own daughter—and can ſhe, in a moment, forget the tenderneſs ſhe has indulged ſo long, and deteſt the wicked couple, as ſhe ought?——impoſſible!

I am really angry at your philoſophic inſenſibility upon this occaſion.--for my part, I can ſcarcely behave with common civility, either to Sir William or miſs Fanning. But lady Lawſon, who is a ſaint, behaves with her uſual kindneſs to them both, nor has ever ſeemed to have diſcovered or hinted the leaſt

leaſt ſuſpicion, of what is already too viſible to the whole country.—Yet her lovely face is emaciated, and pale; and, ſometimes, involuntary ſighs and tears eſcape her.

I know my lord is extremely diſtreſſed, on this occaſion; he loves his ſiſter tenderly; but fears his interpoſing might, poſſibly, make Sir William lay aſide all reſtraint, and, perhaps, occaſion a ſeparation from his wife. I am glad, for this reaſon, that we are leaving the country, as I imagine miſs Fanning's ſituation will make her removal neceſſary, before we return to Woodfort.

You need not have apprehended my diſſenting from your generous ſentiments, with regard to the unhappy victims of love.—Nay, I carry my humanity further, and feel for thoſe, who, without ſtrong paſſion, fall a ſacrifice to the vile arts of their ſeducer, and their own weakneſs. That unſuſpecting confidence, which is, too frequently, the cauſe of womens ruin, muſt certainly ariſe from a generous diſpoſition; and I ſhould look upon a young, innocent girl, who was armed at all points, like a Moor of Moor-hall, to be a moſt unnatural character.

At the ſame time, I deteſt a vicious woman, more than any thing in the creation; and, for this reaſon, my compaſſion does not extend to married ladies, in general, any more than yours.—They have always a protector to fly to; who, upon that occaſion, if upon no other, will with open arms receive them—for, though every man may not love his wife, every man is certainly jealous of his honour; and the falſe notions of the world, are, at preſent, ſo conſtituted, that the failure of a woman brings infamy upon her huſband; while, in a much more pitiable caſe, it reſts ſolely upon the injured unfortunate.

However, Fanny, I agree with you, this is too nice a ſubject for a female pen; though one is inſenſibly led into reflections, that are humiliating to an honeſt mind. But when he, who knew the frailty of our natures, adjudged the convict criminal, his ſentence was not ſevere; for well he knew it was impoſſible

impoſſible there could be found a wretch, ſo loſt to humanity, as to throw a ſtone.

Let not the young, the gay, the rich, the fortunate, whoſe ſituations in life have prevented their being liable to temptation, like an herd of deer, turn their armed brows, againſt their wounded friend, and give her to the hunters!

Miſs Withers and I were laſt night, talking upon this ſubject, and ſhe repeated a little poem, that lord Digby, her ſiſter's lover, had ſhewn her. It was written upon a particular occaſion, at a water-drinking place, in Ireland, called Mallow, ſome years ago.—The unfortunate ſubject of it had been a much admired character in that place, a few ſeaſons before, and dignified by the title of Sappho.

The lines are extremely pretty; turn over, and you will find them in the next page.

VERSES

WRITTEN AT THE

Fountain at Mallow, in the County of Corke, in Ireland.

Thou azure fount, whoſe chryſtal ſtream,
Was once a nobler poet's theme,
While to inſpire the tuneful ſtrain,
Sappho was called, nor called in vain.
Ah let the good forgive! if here,
I pay the tribute of a tear,
In tender grief for Sappho's fate,
The wonder of thy banks ſo late,
So many virtues were thy ſhare,
Thou moſt accompliſhed, ruined fair!
One error ſure may be forgiven,
And pardon find from Earth and Heaven.
That ſovereign power who made us all,
Suffered the ſons of light to fall!
And oft, to mortify our pride,
From virtue lets the wiſeſt ſlide.

Ye fair, no more her faults proclaim;
For your own ſakes, conceal her ſhame;
Since if a nymph ſo wiſe could fail,
We well may think Ye all are frail!

A truce, for the preſent, with this, and every other ſubject, but the pleaſing thought of our meeting, which I hope will be on Tueſday evening, next,

Till then, adieu.

E. WOODVILLE.

P. S. We have got a furniſhed houſe, in St. James's Street; and I am ſtrongly tempted to bring my ſweet little Harry with me.—Cruel Fanny, never to mention my little cherub! but *I'll be revenged, and love him better for it.*

LETTER LXIII.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* LAWSON.

London, Jan^ry. 18.

A Thouſand thanks to my dear lady Lawſon, for the pleaſing account ſhe has given me, of herſelf, and my dear little boy. You will, perhaps, think me ill-natured, for rejoicing that you have no other companion, at preſent; but I am not ſo ſelfiſh, as you may imagine, upon this occaſion; for I well know that the moſt agreeable company in the world, could not abate your affectionate attention to him.

But there are certain ſituations in life, when our deareſt friends become irkſome to us, from an apprehenſion that they may poſſibly diſcover, what we wiſh to hide.—There needs no other illuſtration of my opinion, than a fair confeſſion, that I have, ſometimes, ſeen you under theſe very circumſtances, with your brother and myſelf.—But I hope and believe you will never again experience them. I

may

may now ſpeak freely upon a ſubject, which though your virtue and goodneſs concealed, Sir William has thought proper to mention to my lord, with every eulogium on your conduct, which, noble as it has been, it could deſerve.

Miſs Fanning ſet out for Yorkſhire, this morning, truly ſenſible of your goodneſs, and her own unworthineſs. Sir William ſays he is certain, that it is not in your nature to deteſt her as much ſhe does herſelf. He told my lord that this affair was by no means ſo unfortunate an event, with regard to you two as it might at firſt have appeared to be; as your behaviour had not only made him eſteem, and admire, but love you alſo, a thouſand degrees more than he ever had done before.

He declared, that he felt the impatience of a lover, to throw himſelf at your feet, and ſaid he never ſhould forgive himſelf for having rendered you unhappy by his infamous conduct. Joy, joy, to my dear ſiſter! will you forgive my ſaying, that I envy your ſituation?

I would give you an account of lady Mount Willis's wedding, dreſs, equipage, &c. &c. did I not know that your full heart can have no room to entertain ſuch trifling ideas. But I am certain it will give you pleaſure to hear that lord Mount Willis is as amiable and accompliſhed as his charming bride, and that I think they have the faireſt proſpect of a long uninterrupted courſe of happineſs.

As the houſe of lords are now ſitting, your brother purpoſes ſtaying in town, till March; but I may whiſper to you, what I would not have him hear, that I cannot help regretting ſo long an abſence from Woodfort, from my child, and from yourſelf.

Lady Harriet, my ſiſter Straffon, and Fanny Weſton, preſent their more than compliments, and my lord joins in love and ſincere congratulations, with your

Truly affectionate,

E. WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

IS it poſſible that my dear Seymour can be ſo totally abſorbed in his own felicity, as to make him entirely forget his abſent, his unhappy friend. I have been above two months in London, without hearing from you! Miſs Straffon's marriage with lord Mount Willis brought lady Woodville and me to town.

I confeſs I flattered myſelf that a change of objects, and a ſcene of diſſipation, would have aſſiſted me, in conquering the gloomy diſeaſe that hangs upon my mind. Far from it! I think it has rather increaſed my malady, by laying me under greater reſtraints than I experienced at Woodfort; as all humours, both of the mind and body, acquire additional force, if they are denied a vent.

As my ill fortune would have it, we are lodged in the ſame houſe the marchioneſs lived in; and, to add to my diſtreſs, there is a picture of hers, which was not finiſhed, when ſhe went away, that is hung up in my dreſſing room. As lady Woodville was coming to ſpeak to me yeſterday morning, ſhe overheard me earneſt in diſcourſe with the fair ſhadow; ſhe immediately retired, ſuppoſing there was company with me.

When we met, at dinner, ſhe ſmiling aſked me, who the lady was, that had been to viſit me, in the morning. I could not, for ſome time, conceive the meaning of her queſtion; but when, from the naiveté of her diſcourſe, I underſtood it, I was all confuſion, and your ſiſter, lady Sandford, who was at table with us, gave me a look, that perfectly convinced me ſhe was acquainted with my folly.

The inhuman marchioneſs muſt have revealed my weakneſs to her—Seymour could not betray his friend! Yet may I not from hence deduce a kind of tacit compliment to myſelf, by ſuppoſing ſhe muſt

muſt have been vain of her conqueſt, when ſhe proclaimed it? weak conſolation! like a drowning wretch, I catch at ruſhes!

Why, why can I not tear her fatal image from my breaking heart! have you ſeen her, Seymour? It is a thouſand years, ſince I beheld her—Have age and uglineſs yet overtaken her, or is ſhe lovely ſtill? Excuſe my raving—ſuch, I know, it will appear to you.

I know not whether I told you that lady Woodville had preſented me with a ſon, before we left the country, and appears, if poſſible, ſtill more amiable, in the character of a mother, than before ſhe was one.—I rejoice to think that her being a parent has added to her happineſs, as well as her merit. Our virtue and our felicity are both increaſed, by the diffuſion of our affections.—What a wretch am I then, Seymour, who feel all mine concentered in one object, where they muſt reſt for ever.

This reflection on myſelf is too ſevere, nay moſt unjuſt! for I declare, that I am ſenſible of the utmoſt tenderneſs, for the lovely, the unoffending lady Woodville; and I would die rather than render her unhappy—At the ſame inſtant, I adore the cruel, inſolent, ungrateful marchioneſs—What tortures muſt ariſe, from ſuch a ſtate of contradiction!

I am truly impatient to know whether you have prevailed with your fair veſtal, to renounce her vows, and enter, once again, into this world of cares? be aſſured I am ſincerely intereſted in every thing that relates to you; and this, the moſt momentous point of your life, is of the utmoſt conſequence

To your ever affectionate,

WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER LXV.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

YES, Woodville, I confeſs it, I have been abſorbed, entranced, in the moſt delightful deluſion, that ever lulled the reſtleſs heart of man! I have paſſed three months in paradiſe! I thought not of the world, nor of its cares—I even grudged the hours which nature claimed for reſt, they robbed me of my Charlotte's tuneful voice, though her loved form oft viſited my ſlumbers—But the gay viſion is now flown, and I indeed awake, as from a dream!

You may ſuppoſe I reached Belleveue, in as ſhort a ſpace of time as it was poſſible—My Charlotte was prepared to meet me. At our firſt interview, through all the agonizing joy I felt, I perceived a ſteady calmneſs in her manner, that ſpoke the tender, the indulgent friend, not the fond miſtreſs: the gravity of her dreſs added dignity to her deportment, and awed even my tumultuous wiſhes into ſilence. I looked up to her, as to a ſuperior being; and felt myſelf grow little in her ſight. She took advantage of my firſt impreſſions, and ſpoke to me, in the following manner.

You ſee before you, Sir, the happieſt of her ſex, now firſt permitted to indulge thoſe fond ſenſations, which nature plants in every human heart, filial, and ſiſterly affection.—I will confeſs myſelf ſtill farther gratified, by ſeeing you, the only object of a paſſion, which took its riſe in youth and innocence, but which has been long ſince matured into the firmeſt friendſhip, and rendered you—pardon me, my father!—the firſt, the conſtant object, of my prayers.

But let not the fond wiſhes of a father, or your own deſires, tempt you to think that aught on earth can move me to exchange the ſtate of tranquil happineſs, I now enjoy, for any other, leſs pure,

pure, and more precarious. My vows were heard in heaven; they paſſed not forth from feigning or forced lips; for, in the very moment I pronounced the words, my heart aſſented to the pious ſounds, nor would I then have changed my ſituation, even to be lord Seymour's wife.

Nor do I now repent the choice I made, though fully ſatisfied both of your worth and love. Providence ſeemed to have planted inſuperable bars between us, at the ſad hour when I fixed my purpoſe to renounce the world; and my then torn heart found its ſole peace in humble acquieſcence to his will.

Now mark me, Henry, this is the laſt time that I ſhall ever ſpeak upon the ſubject, and it is in order to ſave your heart the pain of fruitleſs ſolicitation, that I explain my reſolution. Should his holineſs be prevailed upon, by my father's entreaties, to grant me the indulgence he has requeſted, thus far I will, on my part, comply with the general's deſire.—I will ſpend one, two, or three months with him, in this houſe, whenever he ſhall command me; but my place of reſidence muſt be the convent.—There I have ſworn to live, and there I mean to die.

There was ſomething ſo commanding and determined in Charlotte's voice and manner, even while ſhe denounced a ſentence ſo ſevere, that neither her brother, who was preſent, nor I, attempted once to interrupt her. When ſhe had finiſhed, I found my heart ſubdued, and ready to ſacrifice its very wiſh to whatever ſeemed moſt conducive to her happineſs. I was, alas! the fatal cauſe of the vows ſhe had made, how then ſhould I dare to ſolicit the breach of them!

Truth, Woodville, flaſhes conviction, even upon our paſſions, as ſwift as light obtrudes upon the eyes. I inſtantly felt the delicate impoſſibility of her being happy in the world, and as quickly reſolved never to importune her to be wretched. It was not, however, without the ſincereſt regret, that I beheld

I beheld my moſt ſanguine hopes of happineſs vaniſh once more into air.

She received my acquieſcence with her determination, as the higheſt mark of my affection, and told me, that ſhe now conſidered me in a light, where the tendereſt regard for my welfare was compatible with her duty; and that, henceforward, ſhe ſhould know no difference in her affection for captain Beaumont and lord Seymour.

From that time, Woodville, our days have been ſpent in the moſt delightful intercourſe, and have ſtolen away, almoſt unperceived by me. Charlotte's voice, which was ever charming, is now ſo highly improved, that no melody on earth can equal it. The good old general, who abſolutely adores her, is frequently melted into tears while ſhe ſings; and upon all occaſions, gazes on her with a look of repentant ſorrow and delight, as if conſcious of the injury he has done to the world, by robbing it of ſuch an ornament; while her charming countenance is lighted up with the animated looks of filial love.

She has prevailed on the general, to be reconciled to his youngeſt daughter and her huſband — He has obtained the young man's releaſe, and is to purchaſe him a commiſſion immediately. — As ſoon as that can be effected, they will come here, and Charlotte will again retire into the convent — how do I dread the fatal hour of ſeparation! and bluſh to think, that even Charlotte's mind ſhould be ſo far ſuperior to my own!

Within theſe few days, ſhe has frequently mentioned her going to Paris, with a look and manner almoſt expreſſive of impatience, yet chaſtened by the pain ſhe ſees it gives her father, brother, and the unhappy Seymour. — Muſt ſhe again be torn from my fond eyes! Have I not ſacrificed my wiſhes to her will, and will ſhe rob me of the laſt ſole delight of ſometimes gazing on her?

Her brother tried to prevail on her to let me viſit her at the convent, but ſhe has peremptorily refuſed; nor will ſhe even conſent to ſee him, except on particular buſineſs. Her father is the only perſon

ſon ſhe will admit within thoſe walls.—This is a ſelf-impoſed reſtraint, for the abbeſs is perfectly inclined to grant her every indulgence ſhe can aſk.

I know nothing of the marchioneſs, Ransford, nor of any other perſon, at Paris. I ſhall certainly accompany Charlotte thither; and when there, ſhall acquaint you with every thing I hear about them. I am truly concerned, that your infatuation for that worthleſs woman, ſhould ſtill continue—O Woodville! had you loſt ſuch a treaſure, as I have, and by your own fault, too, what would your ſituation now have been! I will think of my miſeries, no more—but endeavour to enjoy the ſmall portion of happineſs that yet remains for me.

I congratulate you on being a father—may that tender tie awaken every pleaſing ſenſation in your mind, and reſtore your heart to the amiable lady Woodville, who only can deſerve it.

Direct your next, to the hotel de———, at Paris; and till I arrive there,

Adieu.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXVI.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

ONCE more returned to Woodfort's peaceful ſhades, eſcaped from crouds and noiſe, to gentle converſe, and the ſweet muſic of my vocal woods; yet can I not enjoy the pleaſing ſcene I have ſo much longed for—the cauſe of my coming hither embitters the ſatisfaction I hoped to find in being here. My Emily is in a bad ſtate of health, occaſioned, as her phyſicians think, by the foggy air and hurry of London.

But,

But, O Seymour! to you I will confeſs the ſecret woundings of my troubled ſoul. I fear that ſorrow preys upon her tender heart; for from the time of our being at York, I have frequently imagined her mind was diſtreſſed; but whenever ſhe ſeemed to perceive that idea riſing in my thought, ſhe has inſtantly baniſhed it, by aſſuming an air of chearfulneſs and vivacity; and the tranſition was made with ſuch amazing eaſe, that I thought it impoſſible ſhe ſhould be inſincere, and that the gloomy mediumof my own reflections, and not hers, had tinctured her appearance with an air of ſorrow. Can it be poſſible, Seymour, that a creature ſo young and innocent, as lady Woodville, can be capable of diſguiſing her ſentiments, and hiding her grief, in ſmiles!

I begin to fear that women are our ſuperiors in every thing. If ſhe has perceived my paſſion for the marchioneſs, and concealed the anguiſh, which ſuch a diſcovery muſt occaſion to a heart like hers, for well I know ſhe fondly loves me, the ſtory of the Spartan boy ſhould no longer be repeated; but lady Woodville be henceforth conſidered as the firſt example of human fortitude——In what a light then muſt *her lord* appear! I cannot bear the thought.

When the phyſicians firſt attended her, they adviſed her ſetting out immediately for the ſouth of France, but ſhe refuſed to go, with a more determined air and manner, than I had ever ſeen her aſſume before. I imagined her diſlike aroſe from the thought of being ſeparated from her ſon, and immediately aſſured her that he ſhould go with us. She thanked me for my condeſcenſion, but ſaid it had only removed one of her objections, and that not the ſtrongeſt.

Then, with a tear juſt ſtarting from her eye, ſhe intreated that I would not preſs her farther. I kiſſed away the pearly fugitive, as it ſtole down her cheeks, which was inſtantly lighted up, by the ſoft glow of joy and modeſty.—She told me, then, ſhe wiſhed to return to Woodfort, and, if I pleaſed, ſhe would go to Briſtol when the ſeaſon came on.

I ac-

I acquieſced in every thing ſhe deſired; and would at that inſtant, as I would at this, have laid down my life to procure her health and happineſs. We ſet out immediately for this place.---For the firſt three or four days I thought her better; ſince that I too plainly perceive that ſhe declines.

If ſhe ſhould die, Seymour, I ſhall conſider myſelf as her murderer. Surely you would then allow me the painful pre-eminence of wretchedneſs, and acknowledge your ſituation, when compared to mine, to be like beds of roſes to the rack. O no! it muſt not be---ſhe ſhall not die.

I never was ſo impatient for any æra, as for the month of June.---I have great hopes from the Hotwells, my Emily's youth, and naturally good conſtitution.

I had not the leaſt expectation, that your Charlotte would have been prevailed on to quit the convent; indeed I ſcarcely hoped that ſhe would have condeſcended as far as ſhe has done, by conſenting to ſpend a portion of every year at Belleveüe. Happy Seymour! to have ſuch a ſubject for expectation before you---It is ſurely one of the higheſt degrees of human felicity to look forward with hope.

You will pardon me if I think there is ſome faint trait of the coquette, in her refuſing to ſee you at the convent. She certainly wiſhes to keep your flame alive; and as ſhe does not mean to feed it, with any thing more ſubſtantial than her converſation, ſhe wiſely thinks, that that, like all other enjoyments, might poſſibly pall upon the taſte if too often repeated.

She has therefore enjoined you a long faſt, in order to heighten your reliſh for the "feaſt of reaſon." You, I dare ſay, as a ſtill paſſionate lover, may probably think this little *ruſe d'amour* unneceſſary; but I am firmly perſuaded, that abſtinence will enhance the value of our mental, as well as corporeal pleaſures.

A ſervant has juſt informed me that lady Woodville is ready to ride out.---I attend her on horſeback every day.

Adieu, my friend,

WOODVILLE.

P. S. I hope this will be a letter of credit for me in your books, as I have not once drawn upon your patience, by mentioning the marchioneſs.---Be generous then, my dear Seymour, and reward my ſelf-denying virtue.

LETTER LXVII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

My dear WOODVILLE, Paris.

I Have made an exchange directly oppoſite to yours, having juſt quitted the ſweet ſcenes of Belleveue, and my Charlotte's delightful converſe, for the irkſome crouds and noiſe of this great city.

The young muſqueteer and his lady arrived at general Beaumont's, about a fortnight ago. Charlotte had fixed the time of her return to the convent, for the tenth day after they came, but her ſiſter, madame de Carignon, being taken violently ill, made her poſtpone her journey, and made me haſten mine.

From the time that Maria complained, Charlotte never quitted her apartment.---Belleveue became a deſart to me, and I fancied I ſhould feel leſs regret, at being ſeparated from her by diſtance than accident---But the effects are the ſame, be the cauſe what it may; for there is no place or ſituation that can afford me happineſs in her abſence.

You treat Charlotte very ſeverely, nay unjuſtly, by charging the higheſt proof of her delicate affection, to the account of coquetry. She is too ſenſible not to perceive that my paſſion for her renders me unhappy, and ſhe, though vainly, flatters herſelf, that time and abſence may effect a cure.

This

This ſhe in confidence declared to captain Beaumont, when preſſed by him to receive my viſits.---Alas! ſhe little knows I would not change my malady for health; and yet I will conform to her preſcription, and drink the bitter draught without a murmur. O Woodville! when we truly love, it is our higheſt tranſport to obey!

I am truly concerned for the account you give of lady Woodville, but find a ſecret conſolation for her ſufferiugs in your ſenſibility, as I am almoſt certain that your tenderneſs properly exerted towards her, will reſtore both her health and happineſs.---I dare not truſt myſelf with a doubt of your conduct upon this occaſion.

I think nothing can be plainer than her knowledge of your attachment to the marchioneſs.—Her poſitive refuſal of going to France marks it too ſtrongly. Woodville, I fear---but I will not reproach you ---your own generous heart muſt ſting you too ſeverely.

I have this moment received a letter from captain Beaumont.---Madame de Carignon's diſorder appears to be the ſmall pox; and as ſhe is pretty far advanced in her pregnancy, they think her life in danger. What has been gained by making her fly from that diſeaſe a few months ago!

But I have not time now to moralize. I ſhall ſend off a phyſician immediately, and ſhall follow him myſelf in a few hours; my Charlotte muſt want conſolation, and is at the ſame time, the only perſon capable of adminiſtering it to her unhappy father.

Yours ever,

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I ſhould give you credit for not mentioning the marchioneſs in your letter, if I had not heard that ladies and lovers generally poſtponed their moſt material buſineſs to their poſtſcripts. Be that as it may, I can only tell you, that the marchioneſs and her *Caro Sposo* are in this town; but where I know not. Captain Barnard and lady Ransford are alſo here.

LETTER LXVIII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

Dear SEYMOUR,

LADY Woodville is much better—Sir John and lady Straffon, lord and lady Mount Willis, have been here this fortnight.—The polite chearfulneſs of their ſociety, has, I believe, been of infinite ſervice to Emily; but I ſtill flatter myſelf, that my attention, and tenderneſs have contributed more to her recovery than any thing elſe.

I have now the real happineſs to think, that every apprehenſion of her mind is entirely removed; I can, therefore, ſcarcely doubt, but that health and peace will return together; for I am but too clearly convinced, that the privation of the latter, occaſioned the loſs of the former.

There certainly never was a more amiable creature, than lady Woodville—ſo unaſſuming in her manners, ſo fearful of giving pain, that ſhe would, if poſſible, conceal her complaints, even from her domeſtics, who all adore her.

Is it not amazing, Seymour, that perfectly ſenſible, as I am, of her uncommon merits, there ſhould be found a being upon earth, who holds a higher place in my affection? How falſely do they flatter our underſtandings, who ſay that eſteem is the baſis of love! If that were true, I ſhould be the happieſt of men, ſhould think no more of the ungrateful Iſabelle, ſhould no longer feel the reproaches of a wayward heart, which would then be intirely devoted to the charming Emily.

But though I may never be able, intirely to eradicate this fatal diſeaſe from my mind, I have great pleaſure in perceiving, that the conſtant exertion of my tenderneſs towards Emily, is attended with the ſincereſt delight to myſelf; as it fulfills a duty, and flatters my humanity with the idea of conferring hap-

happineſs, upon an amiable and deſerving object.

The practice of any virtue, is not ſo difficult as we are apt to imagine—There requires nothing more than reſolution to commence.—Habit will ſoon make it eaſy, if not pleaſant, to us.---Yet ſtill muſt I envy thoſe, who have no need to ſtruggle; and when I behold the ingenuous fondneſs of lord Mount Willis, and Sir John Straffon, to their wives, I curſe my fate, and deſpiſe my own weakneſs, for having reduced me to the contemptible neceſſity of feigning what they are happy enough to feel.

We are to return the viſits of our preſent gueſts, in our way to Briſtol.---Lord Mount Willis has a very fine ſeat in Somerſetſhire.---He is a very agreeable, accompliſhed man. His wife, before her marriage, loved Sir James Miller---paſſionately loved him---and yet ſhe has withdrawn her ill-placed fondneſs, and doats upon her lord. Shall I be weaker, weaker than a puny girl? and ſhall the voice of reaſon always plead in vain? I dare not reply to, theſe mortifying queries.

I moſt ſincerely pity the unhappy general de Beaumont; his misfortunes have been multiplied on him, at a time when he is leaſt able to encounter them. There is a ſpring in youth, which makes us capable of reſiſting almoſt any preſſure; but when a body, which has been nurſed in the ſoft lap of proſperity, becomes enfeebled by years, the mind alſo partakes of its enervation; and we have ſtill leſs reaſon to expect a vigorous exertion of the mental powers, than of muſcular ſtrength, at threeſcore.

The wiſdom, therefore, that is in general attributed to age, ariſes more from a privation of paſſion, than from experience, or any other cauſe. As the nerves grow rigid, the heart is inſenſibly rendered callous. The exquiſite ſenſations, both of pain and pleaſure, after a certain time of life, are imperceptibly blunted, by each returning day; and we at laſt become ſolely indebted to memory for informing us, that we were ever capable of feeling the extremes of joy or ſorrow.

The only paſſion, which nature ſeems to deſign ſhould remain in its full force, in our declining age, is parental affection; and as the others ſubſide, I ſhould imagine that gains ſtrength--There is a mixture too of ſelf-love in it, which generally makes its exiſtence equal with our own. The objects of this affection are gradually maturing, under our foſtering care; each day they make ſome advances towards our idea of perfections, a likeneſs to ourſelves; with anxious hopes we watch the tender bud, look with delight upon the opening bloſſom, and gaze enraptured on the blooming fruit---It is our own, we planted, and we reared it! In this moſt tender point, then, the poor old general is now wounded; his armour and his breaſt-plate thrown aſide, the barbed arrow ſinks into his heart.

Should madame de Carignon die, which I hope ſhe will not, there are abundance of good chriſtians, who would immediately conclude her death to be a judgment on him, for his inhuman treatment of Charlotte. But I, who confeſs myſelf a ſinner, have not a doubt of his having already atoned his paſſive guilt, towards her, by his contrition.---You are the ſingle perſon, who appear to be injured by it,---for I am fully ſatisfied, that Charlotte is no longer unhappy.

I have philoſophized and moralized upon this ſubject, to the extent of my time and paper, perhaps to prevent my entering again upon another, on which I am neither philoſopher, nor moraliſt.---I ſhall, therefore, fly from it, by bidding you,

Adieu.

WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER LXIX.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

MADAME de Carignon is recovered, if it can be called a recovery, for a fine young woman to ſurvive her beauty.--That is, indeed, abſolutely deſtroyed; but, as her huſband's fondneſs ſeems unabated by the loſs, her homelineſs may poſſibly become an advantage, rather than a misfortune.---Few, very few women, or men either, have ſtrength of mind ſufficient to bear univerſal admiration; and when that is derived from beauty alone, there is ſcarce a young perſon who thinks it neceſſary to attain any other qualification or accompliſhment, that does not tend to the embelliſhment of their charms.

I have obſerved through life, that we ſeldom meet with an agreeable man or woman, who have been remarkably handſome. But, perhaps, this may be philoſophically accounted for.--As Providence acts by the ſimpleſt means, and beauty is alone ſufficient to procure the love and admiration of mankind, great qualities would be unneceſſary to the purpoſe, and perhaps mar the original deſign; for we ſhould be more apt to fear, than love *a human being*, that we conſidered as abſolutely perfect.

I therefore think with Milton, that where there "is beſtowed too much of ornament, in outward "ſhew elaborate, the inward's leſs exact;" which may be a kind of conſolation to thoſe, whom nature has dealt her perſonal favours to, with a ſcanty hand.

In the country, where I am at preſent, neither youth or beauty are of much value. The grand-

mother and grand-daughter are, pretty near, upon the ſame footing.---What little difference there may be is generally in the dowager's favour; as ſhe may probably be poſſeſſed of more knowledge and experience, and a better fortune.---No woman is ever young or old at Paris; for the ſame paint that fills up the furrows of the aged cheek, hides the ſoft down upon the youthful one.

You ſee that a word to the wiſe is enough, and that I have followed your plan of philoſophizing, upon indifferent ſubjects, to avoid recurring to painful ones.——I muſt, however, acquaint you, that I am to attend Charlotte to Paris, in three days. She has inſiſted on my returning to England, as ſoon as ſhe enters the cloiſter; and I have conſented, on her promiſing to meet me here next ſpring, provided the general be then living.

The poor old man has inſiſted on captain Beaumont's quitting the army, and taking poſſeſſion of his fortune, except a ſmall annuity, which he reſerves for charitable uſes. He has behaved nobly to monſieur and madame de Carignon, and preſented twenty thouſand crowns to the convent of St. Anthony, as a reward for their kindneſs to his beloved Charlotte. You would pity him ſincerely, if you were to behold his diſtreſs at the idea of parting with his favourite child; but

"What are, alas! his woes, compared to mine!"

Adieu, my friend; if I were capable of joy, I ſhould feel it for lady Woodville's recovery. I ſhall write to you from Paris; and am

Ever your's,

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXX.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE,

Paris.

I Have once more bid adieu to my dear Charlotte.---But painful as the hour of ſeparation was, the recollection of what I had formerly endured, from her entrance into the convent, with the fond hope of our re-meeting in a few months, have abated its anguiſh; and ſome very extraordinary accidents, which have happened within theſe few hours, have taken up my whole attention, and carried me, as it were, out of myſelf.

The count de Clerembaut, for whom you know I have a ſincere friendſhip, came to ſee me yeſterday morning.---He told me he was juſt come from the tennis court, where there had been a very warm *brouillerie* between two Engliſh gentlemen. One of their names, he ſaid, was Ranſford, who quitted the field to his antagoniſt, but with a look and manner, that ſeemed to ſay, he was determined to meet him elſewhere.

I was alarmed at this account, and immediately ordered my chariot, and drove to the marchioneſs's. Ranſford was not at home---I came back to my hôtel, and wrote to him; expatiated on the ill conſequences of fighting a duel in Paris; begged him to defer his reſentments, till his opponent, whom I underſtood to be an Engliſhman, and he ſhould meet in their own country; but, if he ſhould be ſo circumſtanced, as to be under a neceſſity of rejecting my advice, I hoped he would, at leaſt, accept of my ſervice to attend him to the field, or command me in whatever way he thought proper.

In about three hours I received the following anſwer.

To Lord SEYMOUR.

" My dear LORD,

" I am truly thankful for your kind attention to " me; but I am at preſent too far embarked to recede; " and even your admonition muſt therefore come too " late. Let the conſequence be what it will, I can- " not think of heightening my diſtreſs, by involving " you in it. But I have a much more material act " of friendſhip to implore from you.- The marchio- " neſs will ſtand in need of your protection.---I need " ſay no more——haſten to her; the affair will be " over, before you receive this. I have the ſatisfac- " tion to think that captain Barnard deſerves his fate " if he ſhould fall by my hand, as he has this day " added freſh inſult to former injury.

Adieu, perhaps for ever,

" WILLIAM RANSFORD.

I inſtantly ran, or rather flew to the marchioneſs, whom I found waiting dinner for Mr. Ransford---She ſeemed ſurprized at my entrance, as ſhe had heard that I had been there in the morning.---The anxiety of my countenance became contagious; and ſhe enquired with the greateſt earneſtneſs, if I knew any thing about Mr. Ransford? before I could frame a reply, the lieutenant de Police was on the ſtairs, and I ruſhed out of the room, to prevent his coming into it. He paſſed me by, and entered.---She did not appear to be alarmed.

It ſeems there is a law-ſuit between her and her late huſband's heir, for a part of her jointure; and ſhe, I ſuppoſe, concluded, that he came to execute ſome order of court, relative to that affair. But long before he could fully explain the real motives of his coming, ſhe ceaſed to hear, and had ſunk motion- eſs upon the ſofa where ſhe ſat.

The lieutenant and his myrmidons, took poſſeſſi- on of every thing, *au nom du roi*, and aſſured us that

that diligent ſearch would be made for the murderer I intreated him to leave the unhappy lady's apartment to herſelf, and that I would be anſwerable for every thing in it. He retired with infinite politeneſs, which is the beſt ſubſtitute to humanity: and, in this country, which abounds with ſhew and deluſion, is frequently miſtaken for it.

As the marchioneſs is five months gone with child, it was thought proper to have her blooded.---Every poſſible care has been and ſhall be taken of her. She is diſtreſſingly grateful for my ſmall attentions toward her. But a mind ſubdued by affliction is apt to over-rate every little mark of kindneſs.

This unhappy affair will detain me here, for ſome time longer.---I will not quit the poſt of guardian to the afflicted fair, till I reſign her into Ransford's hands. You ſhall hear daily from me.

Adieu.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXXI.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

YESTERDAY paſſed away in forming melancholy conjectures on the recent cauſe of quarrel between captain Barnard and Mr. Ransford; in indeterminate ideas, whither he would bend his courſe, and in liſtening to various reports which were variouſly repeated by the friends, acquaintance, and ſervants of the unhappy combatants.

We had however, the ſatisfaction to diſcover, that Ransford had made ſome proviſion for his eſcape, as he had converted above three hundred pounds into poſt bills the morning of the duel, and had ordered a Swiſs ſervant who has lived with him for five years, and is remarkably attached to him, to attend

attend at a particular place, with a couple of the fleeteſt horſes he could hire or puchaſe. From hence I conclude he will travel to Switzerland, and take up his abode at Berne, till he can return with honour and ſafety into England.

You will perhaps ſay, why at that particular place more than any other? I grant the idea is formed upon a vague conjecture; but André was born at Berne, and the Swiſs are of all nations, the Scotch not excepted, the moſt ſmitten with the love of their country. Ransford's mind muſt be unhinged by this ſad accident, torn from its props, and ready to recline itſelf on the firſt friendly ſtay that will ſupport it. The honeſt Swiſs looks back with tranſport on thoſe barren hills where firſt his mind found joy, his body ſtrength; and leads his maſter there to ſhare the gifts which he received from nature, and the ſoil. I ſay he will not ſtop till he arrives at Berne.

The marchioneſs does not agree with my opinion; ſhe thinks Bruſſels, Holland, Italy, nay England more agreeable. That is, ſhe could like to fix her reſidence, in any of thoſe places, rather than at Berne. —They are all equal to me, except England, where I am pretty ſure he will not go.

There were too ſealed letters found in captain Barnard's pocket, the one addreſſed to lady Ransford, the other to the man who killed him. I will wait upon her ladyſhip to-morrow to obtain the latter; it muſt certainly throw ſome extraordinary light upon the affair.

I had written ſo far when I received a ſummons from the marchioneſs to attend inſtantly. A thouſand apprehenſions crouded on my mind; I feared Ransford might not have eſcaped, and I knew the vindictive ſpirit of his ſtep-mother too well to hope that ſhe would not proſecute. I found the marchioneſs in a ſtate little ſhort of madneſs---her expreſſions were ſuch as made me rather fear than feel---her eyes darted fire, and ſhe traverſed the circumference

of

of her dreſſing room, with the air and pace of diſtraction: ſhe ſeemed to be unſexed.

Where is he, madam? ſaid I. Let me fly to him and try what gold can do, to purchaſe his enlargement. This muſt be our only reſource: let them take it all, ſaid ſhe, but let me go—a *lettre de cachet!* no monarch, nor no miniſter dare ſign it—I will fly to Verſailles—it is already granted, and you ſee me a priſoner at this moment—dare you reſcue me?

Amazement took away the power of ſpeech; I did not underſtand her, it was impoſſible I ſhould.—At that inſtant, a perſon of a very gentleman-like and engaging appearance, entered the chamber.—He ſeemed to be aſtoniſhed at her beauty, and perturbation, and gazed, for an inſtant, firſt at her, and then at me—at laſt, ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he addreſſed me in the following words.

I am ſorry your indiſcretion has permitted our meeting, Sir.—It is true I have received no particular information againſt you; you are, therefore, at liberty to depart; which I beg you will do inſtantly, as you cannot be ſafe in this houſe a ſingle moment.

I immediately perceived he had miſtaken me for Mr. Ransford, and readily accepting all the good will he had ſhewn to my friend's unhappy ſituation, returned him thanks for his intended humanity, and aſſured him of my gratitude, for a favour, which I did not ſtand in need of. He bluſhed at his miſtake, and ſaid that he had been twelve years in office, and had never exceeded his commiſſion, but in that way. Strange, that a man ſhould bluſh, that had been twelve years in ſuch an office?

He then explained his buſineſs.—He had a *lettre de cachet* againſt madame, which the marquis de St. Aumont, her huſband's nephew, had obtained, to prevent her quitting the kingdom, till the ſuit between them ſhould be determined.

Her

Her rage is not to be deſcribed; ſhe accuſed the laws of injuſtice, and its officers of inſolence, and cruelty. Aſked to what priſon a peereſs ſhould be led, and whether ſhe was to be handcuffed like a malefactor? to all this intemperate language, the officer replied with great calmneſs, that her ladyſhip might put an end to her diſtreſs, by giving ſecurity to the court for her ſtay in Paris. She told him ſhe would not ſtay for all the courts in Europe. He then ſaid ſomething in a low voice, about her being confined.

She had ſent for her lawyer, who arrived critically, and prevailed on her, at laſt, to paſs her word jointly with us, that ſhe would not quit Paris, without leave of the court, which he ſaid he would apply for the next day.

The agitation of her ſpirits now ſubſiding, ſhe fell into violent paſſions of tears; bewailed her fate, and ſaid ſhe was the moſt wretched of human beings. I fear ſhe has more reaſon to think ſo than ſhe is yet acquainted with. For after ſhe withdrew to her chamber, her lawyer, at my requeſt, explained the nature of the proceſs againſt her, and aſſured me that the late marquis de St. Aumont, had no power over thoſe lands, which he ſettled on her for a jointure; that he was, therefore, very glad to find ſhe was married to an Engliſh gentleman of fortune, as he had great reaſon to believe the cauſe would go againſt her — That he feared ſhe was extremely in debt, and that all her perſonalities were already forfeited to the crown, as being the ſuppoſed property of Mr. Ranſford. What a ſcene of diſtreſs, Woodville! and what will become of this unhappy pair?

Before I left the houſe, the marchioneſs ſent for her lawyer into her chamber.—I took that opportunity of retiring to write to you, and ſhall now cloſe this melancholy narrative with wiſhing you good night.

SEYMOUR.

LET-

LETTER LXXII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

BOTH my mind and body are ſo extremely harraſſed, that I am ſcarce able to give you an account of the diſtreſſes in which I am involved.

Juſt as I had ſealed my laſt letter to you, I received a billet from captain Beaumont, to inform me, that the general and he were that moment arrived at Paris, and that their coming was occaſioned by a very alarming account they had received of my ever-dear Charlotte's being extremely indiſpoſed.

I flew directly to the general's houſe, and found the poor old man ſinking under the double weight of years and ſorrow. He ſhewed me the abbeſs's letter to him, which ſaid, "that from the "time of Charlotte's return into the convent, a fe- "ver had preyed upon her ſpirits; that ſhe had "concealed her illneſs for ſeveral days, and even "made light of it when it was too viſible; that "ſhe was now reduced to ſuch a ſtate of weakneſs, "that the phyſicians had declared medicine could "be of no uſe to her, and that an immediate "change of air was the only chance ſhe had for "life."

No words can expreſs what I felt on reading this ſad letter; yet will I candidly confeſs, that her father's anguiſh ſeemed to ſurpaſs even mine. He called himſelf her murderer! and ſaid if ſhe ſhould die, he never could have hopes of mercy or ſalvation. — Alas! am I not guilty as himſelf! My fatal raſhneſs made her take thoſe vows, which her fond love for me, in any other caſe, would have rejected!

The general determined to remove Charlotte out of the convent the next day, and convey her as far

out

out of Paris as her ſtrength would permit. He intreated me to accompany them, in their melancholy and ſlow progreſs to Belleveüe. Judge of my diſtreſs, at being obliged to refuſe! But my honour was paſſed to a wretch, who has none—the marchioneſs.—Captain Beaumont promiſed to bring me a faithful account of his ſiſter's ſituation in the morning, and I retired home—not to reſt.

Captain Beaumont was punctual to his word; he came to me before eight o'clock, and told me that his father and he had ſeen Charlotte, and found her in a very weak ſtate; that ſhe had conſented to ſet out with them for Belleveüe, but that he did not believe they ſhould be able to carry her farther than three or four leagues that day, and intreated me to go with them. I readily conſented, and determined that I would return to Paris that night, as ſoon as ever Charlotte ſhould retire to bed.

The captain and I agreed to meet, at the general's houſe, at eleven o'clock, to follow our fair fugitive, who was to ſet out with her father, from the convent. He told me that Charlotte had made a thouſand tender inquiries, about my health; that ſhe rejoiced at my being ſtill in Paris, and ſeemed delighted at the thought of ſeeing me that day. I needed not theſe new proofs of her regard to increaſe my ardour for her; my ſoul was on the wing to meet her, yet ſtill the claims of friendſhip were not unheard.

I reſolved to go immediately to lady Ransford, for the letter that was addreſſed to her ſtep-ſon, and found in Barnard's pocket. Then to wait on *the marchioneſs*, and make my excuſe for abſenting myſelf from her the remainder of that day: but though *ſhe* had left Paris, it was fated, that I ſhould not quit it for ſome time.

As I was coming out of my apartment, I was met by the lieutenant de police, who arreſted me as an accomplice with the marchioneſs, in having defrauded

ſrauded his majeſty, by conveying away her moſt valuable effects, which were confiſcated to his uſe, and having fled herſelf, though under an *arrêt*.—Never was aſtoniſhment greater than mine.

In vain I pleaded my ignorance of the fact, or the innocence of my intentions, or offered to give ample ſecurity for thoſe effects, which had been ſecreted by that mean that worthleſs woman! The officer told me he was not quite ſuch an idiot, as the perſon who had taken my word before, and that no argument I could urge, would have the leaſt weight with him.

As the laſt and moſt prevailing rhetoric, I offered him my purſe, if he would go with me to general Beaumont's, and take his bail for my appearance the next day; but he withſtood my gold, and even refuſed to let me return into my apartment, to write an apology for not attending my beloved Charlotte.

This was the firſt time, I had ever felt "the in-"ſolence of office."—I ſubmitted to it, though reluctantly, and was immediately conveyed to the Chatelet.—I ſent off a ſervant to captain Beaumont, to deſire him to come to me; but as ſoon as I was lodged in priſon, I was informed that no perſon would be admitted to ſee me, as they conſidered me as a delinquent of ſtate.

I then demanded to be confronted with my accuſers, and brought before a judge. They ſmiled at my ignorance, and told me, that as I was not in England, I muſt ſubmit to their laws, which were not quite ſo expeditious as ours, and that patience would be my beſt reſource for the preſent.

Though my temper is naturally gentle, and my paſſions have been long ſubdued by affliction, it was with difficulty I could command my rage—yet on whom ſhould I vent it? on wretches brazed by cuſtom to the wild ravings of reſentment, or the ſoft plaints of ſorrow!

As ſoon as I was capable of reaſoning with myſelf, I conſidered that a conſciouſneſs of my own integrity

tegrity ought to ſupport me under the diſagreeable circumſtances I was involved in by another's fault; and am certain it would have done ſo, had I not been diſappointed of the painful pleaſure of ſeeing the lovely, languid Charlotte! I lamented the uneaſineſs which ſhe muſt feel from hearing of my confinement, unknowing of the cauſe; and the apprehenſion of her thinking me guilty of ſome criminal action, and her ſuffering from that thought, almoſt diſtracted me. I curſed the marchioneſs a thouſand times—Yes, Woodville, from my heart I curſed her. Bane of your happineſs! diſturber now of mine!

When I grew a little calm, I deſired to ſee the keeper of the priſon, as I wanted to know whether I was at liberty to write to the Engliſh ambaſſador, who I knew was then at Verſailles, and to the reſt of my friends. The governor du Chatelet, was immediately annonced, and on his entering, my eye was ſtruck with the moſt graceful figure and engaging countenance, I had ever ſeen. He ſeemed to be turned of fifty, but had ſuch a ſoftneſs of features and complexion, as is rarely to be met with but in extreme youth. His appearance filled me with ſurprize; I was amazed that ſuch a man ſhould be capable of ſuch an office, which I ſuppoſed could only be ſuited to the moſt inſenſible, or brutal natures.

His converſation was as pleaſing as his perſon; he readily aſſented to my requeſt, and ſaid he would take care that my letters ſhould be delivered. He then gave orders that my own ſervants ſhould be permitted to attend me, and that any perſon whom I deſired to ſee, ſhould be immediately admitted. I thanked him for his humanity, in removing every unneceſſary reſtraint, and aſſured him I ſhould make no other uſe of his indulgence, than that of endeavouring to procure my liberty, by the moſt legal means.

He encreaſed my aſtoniſhment, by replying to me, in Engliſh, that he could not have any doubts of

of lord Seymour's honour; and that he hoped I would do him and his family the favour to dine with them, and allow them as much of my company as was convenient to me, while I remained in the Chatelet.

My curiosity to know something more of his family, made me accept his invitation; though heaven knows how little inclined to mix with strangers, or enter into any plan of dissipation. I have written to the ambassador and to my dear Charlotte. By removing her anxiety I have lessened my own.

I am not apprehensive that my confinement can last many hours; I will therefore endeavour to keep up my spirits, with the fond hope of flying to my Charlotte, the moment I am released. In the mean time, I attend the governor's summons to dinner, and for the present bid my dear Woodville

Adieu, your's.

SEYMOUR.

P. S. What is the reason that I do not hear from you? whilst at liberty, I regretted, but in my confinement shall lament your silence. My affectionate compliments to lady Woodville.

LETTER LXXIII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

"Hope travels thro', nor quits us, till we die."

AND without that charming companion, I think I should not now survive to tell my dear Woodville, that I am just released from a confinement of fifteen tedious days. But let let me be methodical in my relation.—No, it is impossible! my chariot

chariot waits to carry me to Belleveüe, to my adored Charlotte! She is better, I am happy and

moſt ſincerely yours.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXXIV.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Belleveüe.

CHARLOTTE recovers daily; my fears for her precious life are abated. Your ſilence now alarms me.—Why, muſt I never be free from apprehenſions, for thoſe I truly love? But I will, for the preſent, indulge your impatience, and reſtrain my own.

On the firſt day of my confinement, I was ſhewn into the governor's apartment, which was elegantly furniſhed, and received by him and his lady, with the utmoſt politeneſs. She was ſurrounded by five beautiful children, the eldeſt, a girl about ſixteen. I will confeſs it, Woodville! my eyes were inſenſibly rivetted to this young creature's lovely form; and for the firſt time of my life, *my heart* received delight, from gazing on the charms of another woman, beſides Charlotte!

I did not long indulge the dangerous pleaſure, without calling *the wanderer* to account, and ſoon perceived that the fair Maria's chief attraction was owing to her remarkable likeneſs to my Charlotte. This obſervation quieted my ſcruples, and left me the innocent ſatisfaction of admiring her beauty, with a brother's eye. Yet ſtill my curioſity was increaſed, by the reſemblance; and as ſoon as I was left alone with the governor, I took the liberty of aſking him, if he was related to general Beaumont?

He anſwered, no; but ſaid his wife was ſiſter to the late madame de Beaumont, though much unlike her both in mind and perſon; that he could well allow madame D'Angueville inferior in reſpect of beauty, but that her underſtanding and her heart were fraught with every charm and virtue, that could adorn a woman. I aſked

I aſked him, had he ever ſeen his niece Charlotte Beaumont? he anſwered with an honeſt warmth, yes, Sir, when it was too late to make her happy, or reward your merit—would to heaven I had known her ſooner! I bowed and thanked him, even for fruitleſs wiſhes, and for a time forgot my being a priſoner, from the delight I felt at being with one who knew and loved my Charlotte.

We became totally unreſerved; and the governor informed me, that he was of the N—— family, deſcended from one of thoſe infatuated men, who had ſacrificed their fortunes, and renounced their country to ſerve a weak and worthleſs prince, who had neither inclination or power to reward their attachment.

He told me that his father had died of a broken heart, while he was but a child; that his friends had with difficulty obtained him a commiſſion in the Iriſh brigade, where he had ſerved above twenty years without arriving to the rank of captain; and that he might ſtill have remained in that ſituation, but that general Beaumont, by his intereſt, had procured him the poſt he then enjoyed, when he and his family had been reduced to the greateſt diſtreſs.

That he hoped he had acquitted himſelf in his office, with humanity and compaſſion; and by many circumſtances which he related, convinced me, that none but a perſon of a noble and generous nature, was fit to preſide over the number of unfortunates, that guilt or accident impels to that gloomy manſion. Sad reflection! that thoſe who are fitteſt for that charge, are moſt averſe to accept, and leaſt thought of for the office.

About ſeven o'clock in the evening, captain Beaumont inquired for me, and was immediately admitted. His uncle, monſieur D'Angueville, had never ſeen him before.—They were mutually charmed with each other. The captain told me that as ſoon as my ſervant acquainted him with my ſituation, he wrote a line to the general, to inform him

of

of it, and ſet out on the inſtant, for Verſailles; that he had ſeen the Engliſh ambaſſador, who promiſed to wait on monſieur le duc de N——, the premier miniſter, next morning, and obtain my releaſe as ſoon as poſſible.

I thanked my generous friend for his kind attention to my intereſts, and paſſed the evening with tolerable chearfulneſs. The next day, about noon, I received a viſit from Mr. S—— ſecretary to our ambaſſador. He told me that his excellency had been with the miniſter, and deſired that I might be ſet at liberty immediately. That the duc de N—— had informed him it was impoſſible to comply with his requeſt, as there was a criminal proceſs inſtituted againſt me, for aiding and abetting the marchioneſs de St. Aumont, in open violation of the laws; and the only favour that could be indulged me, was the allowing me counſel, and bringing the affair to a trial, with the utmoſt expedition.

I endeavoured to make a virtue of neceſſity, and affected to appear contented with the very ſmall favour that his excellency had obtained for me. But not to make the repetition of my confinement as tedious to you as the time was to me, the day of trial came, and by the joint teſtimony of the marchioneſſes's lawyer, her ſervants, and my own, I was acquitted of being concerned in her eſcape, but obliged to give bail for four thouſand pounds, which is the value ſet upon the jewels, plate, &c. which ſhe either carried off, or ſecreted.

Thus have I been injured, in my honour, perſon, and property, by my humane attention to that moſt worthleſs of humankind. But, no matter; and if the meanneſs of her conduct towards me, ſets her in the light, in which I wiſh you to behold her, I ſhall think myſelf overpaid, for every injury I have ſuſtained on her account.

The

The moment I recovered my liberty, I waited on the ambaſſador, who had come to Paris, on purpoſe to know if he could be any way ſerviceable to me. I made my acknowledgments to him, and ſet out that evening with my dear and indefatigable friend, captain Beaumont, for the loved place where my heart's treaſure lay. I have already told you that I had the happineſs of finding her much better; and the joy which ſhe felt at ſeeing her brother and me, has, I flatter myſelf, contributed to her recovery.

The marchioneſs's lawyer told me he had received a letter from her, dated Bruſſels, wherein ſhe exulted, at her own cleverneſs, in getting out of the power of the laws, and gave ſome dark hints, of her not being married to Ransford. Heaven grant this may be true! The ſuit with her huſband's nephew, will certainly go againſt her; and for her contempt of the *arret*, ſhe will be outlawed, and her whole fortune confiſcated;—ſo that if, as I hope, ſhe is not Ransford's wife, ſhe may poſſibly be reduced to her original poverty, and meet the contempt due to her vices, from all mankind.

This is the fifth letter I have written to you, without receiving a line from you. I have certainly reaſon to apprehend that ſome fatal accident has occaſioned your ſilence, for I can never doubt the ſincerity of your attachment, to yours,

Moſt truly,

SEYMOUR.

LET-

LETTER LXXV.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

PITY me! pray for me, my deareſt ſiſter! for heaven but mocks my prayers! had they been heard, lord Woodville's life had never been in danger. I am diſtracted, Fanny! I would I were. Though anguiſh, ſuch as mine, ſtrains every ſenſe, and racks my tortured brain, it will not crack! No, I am ſtill awake to all the miſeries a wretch can feel, who doats and who deſpairs!

On Tueſday ſe'ennight, fatal day! my lord received a letter from lord Seymour while I was preſent. I obſerved that he was ſtrongly agitated while he read it, even to a change of countenance and colour. I thought there muſt be ſome extraordinary cauſe for his emotion, which perhaps he wiſhed to conceal from me; I therefore, roſe ſoftly from my ſeat, and attempted to retire.

O Fanny! can I ever forget the look of ſorrow which he wore, when taking me by the hand he ſaid, you muſt not leave me, Emily! but ſhare a painful office with your lord.—You muſt endeavour to conſole poor lady Harriet, for Barnard's death; Ransford has killed him, and is fled from Paris.

He then turned quick away, as if to hide his grief. It could not be for Bernard that he wept; and Ransford, he as well as I, believed was ſafe.—O there is another cauſe! let me not think of it, leſt it divide my tears, which ſhould all flow for him, not for my worthleſs ſelf.

He told me he would go directly, to Sir Harry Ransford, to acquaint him with his ſon's misfortune, and as he could not do it abruptly, ſaid it was poſſible he might ſtay to dinner there, and begged I would take the moſt immediate opportunity of informing lady Harriet of this unhappy affair. His horſes were immediately ordered, and he rode off.

I ſent

I ſent for Fanny Weſton to aſſiſt me in the painful taſk I had undertaken. But why do I waſte a moment in thinking of any object upon earth but one? About two hours after my lord left Woodſort, one of the ſervants who had attended him gallopped into the court yard, ordered the chariot to be got ready inſtantly, and bid my woman tell me that my lord had fallen from his horſe and was much hurt.

I was ſitting in lady Harriet's dreſſing room, when the ſound of the chariot paſſing haſtily under the window alarmed me.—I rang to know the cauſe, when a ſervant, pale as death, told me that my lord had met with a ſad accident. I cried where is he? and ruſhed out of the room. I was met by my woman on the ſtairs. Lady Harriet, Fanny Weſton, and ſhe, prevented my running into the high way; they poured drops and water down my throat. I knew not what they did or ſaid to me.

An expreſs was ſent off for a ſurgeon, who arrived in leſs than half an hour after my lord was brought home ſenſeleſs. They would not ſuffer me to ſee him till he had been bled and his wounds dreſſed.—But gracious heaven when I beheld him!

Let me try to baniſh the ſad idea—Alas! I fear it will never be effaced! never, my ſiſter, never, unleſs I live to ſee his natural form reſtored to my fond wiſhes and my ardent prayers!———Oh, join with me, my Fanny! in earneſt ſupplication, for his precious life!

The humane, the tender-hearted ſurgeon ſaid every thing that could amuſe, but not diſpel my fears. That his wounds, though dangerous in his poor judgment, were not mortal; but that he wiſhed for better help than his own.

An expreſs was diſpatched for Middleton or Ranby.

I cannot, but I would not if I could deſcribe the night I paſſed—my lord remained quite ſenſeleſs; enviable ſtate! yet, now-and-then, his languid eyes fixed on me. About five in the morning he fell into a kind of doſe, and remained in that ſituation till near

ſeven, when he awoke in the moſt violent delirium—he raved inceſſantly – *but not of me.*

In this moſt melancholy ſtate has he continued eleven days——" a burning fever, and a broken " heart!" O Fanny, it is too much! but ſhould he recover it I never ſhall.

Mr. Ranby and the ſurgeon who firſt attended my dear lord, have both aſſured me, that the hurt which he received from his fall, could not endanger his life. But neither they, nor the phyſians who viſit him daily, can pretend to ſay what turn his fever will take. Strong opiates have been given, and at length have taken effect; he ſleeps, my Fanny! while I who have never cloſed my eyes ſince the ſad accident, indulge them now in their once pleaſing taſk, of writing to my friend, my more than ſiſter! grief weighs my eye-lids down, but not with the ſoft preſſure of an healthful ſlumber.

Adieu, adieu, my Fanny!

E. WOODVILLE.

LETTER LXXVI.

Lady STRAFFON, *To Lady* WOODVILLE.

LET not my deareſt Emily condemn her ſincerely affectionate and afflicted Fanny, for not having inſtantly replied in perſon, to her moſt affecting letter.

O, my Emily! my child! my ſiſter! how does my heart bleed for you! tears dim my ſight, and yet perhaps your eyes are dry! the burning balls fixed on your dying lord! would you could weep as I do.

As my ſpirits have been rather weak and languid ſince my lying in, even while I was at Woodfort, lady Mount Willis, whoſe attention and tenderneſs

to

to me is without bounds, prevailed upon Sir John and me, to paſs a few weeks with her, at a houſe which my lord has hired near Windſor, while his family ſeat is repairing. The old topics, of change of air and moderate exerciſe were exhauſted, both by Sir John and her, before I would conſent.

At length I moſt reluctantly complied. I knew not then why I ſhould feel reluctance; but I now begin to think with you, that our preſages ſhould be liſtened to —— Would I had hearkened then to mine! I ſhould now be with my deareſt Emily, and by ſharing her anguiſh and fatigue, perhaps, in ſome degree, might leſſen both: but we now muſt feel the ſad addition to our preſent miſeries, of knowing that each other is unhappy.

About two hours before the poſt brought your letter to Windſor, lord Mount Willis and Sir John ſet out for his lordſhip's in Oxfordſhire; and while Lucy and I were ſitting at breakfaſt after they were gone, we heard a violent ſcream—I knew the voice to be my little Emily's—I ran up ſtairs to her chamber, without recollecting that ſhe had been ſome time dreſſed, and playing with the houſe-keeper's daughter, a child of her own age in the garden.

Lady Mount Willis followed the ſound, and found my poor little angel lying on the ground with her leg broken—the only words ſhe ſpoke were, "Do "not let my mama be frighted," and fainted quite away.

In this condition ſhe was brought into the houſe; I will not attempt to deſcribe mine. Your ſituation is by far more dreadful, yet ſure it was a ſcene of deep diſtreſs. Suffice it now to ſay, that the moment ſhe is out of danger, I will fly to ſhare or alleviate my deareſt Emily's affliction. The fond, the tender claims of child and ſiſter, now divide my heart—it almoſt breaks that I muſt ſay,

Adieu.

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER LXXVII.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* SEYMOUR.

My deareſt FANNY,

THIS is the one-and-twentieth day of my lord's illneſs; and on this day, be it for ever bleſſed by me! the phyſicians have obſerved a change in his diſorder, attended with many favourable ſymptoms that gave hopes of life. He lay for many days, in a ſtate of inſenſibility, had ceaſed to rave, and hardly moved his limbs.

At eleven o'clock this morning, he ſighed extremely; O Fanny! thoſe ſad ſighs too long have pierced my heart! then ſeemed to wake as from a trance. The firſt object he took notice of was me, and with a languid voice he ſaid, my Emily, have you ſat up all night? O go to bed, my love. Then cloſed his eyes and fell into a little ſlumber.

I could not anſwer him, tears came to my relief and drowned my utterance. Yes, Fanny, I have wept moſt bitterly, and my poor heart is much relieved. Doctor Fenton inſiſts on bleeding me immediately. I know he thinks that I have caught the fever from my lord; bleſſed contagion! may it not, Fanny, lighten his diſeaſe? would I not die to leſſen or remove his heart-felt pains! but I much fear that even my death would not now heal his griefs.—She is another's; and never can be his.—I fear I rave, my thoughts are wild; I do not wiſh that you ſhould comprehend them.

Your poor, dear Emily! I hope ſhe will recover.—A broken limb is dreadful! but a broken heart far worſe! They ſnatch away the pen. Well! well! I will be blooded. Aye, and I will go to bed; my limbs no longer can ſupport my weight.

Farewel, my Fanny.

E. W.

LET-

LETTER LXXVIII.

Miſs WESTON, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

My dear Lady STRAFFON,

I Know not how to acquaint you with the additional misfortune that is fallen upon us all. Our dear lady Woodville lies dangerouſly ill of a fever. My heart almoſt breaks while I tell you, that the phyſicians have but little hopes of her life. During the firſt one-and-twenty days of her lord's illneſs, ſhe never left his chamber, nor could even be prevailed upon to reſt herſelf, except for a few minutes, when quite exhauſted, on a couch.

What ſurprized lady Harriet and me moſt was, that ſhe never ſhed a tear, till lord Woodville firſt recovered his reaſon and ſpoke to her. The ſervants who attended in his chamber, have told me, that while he remained inſenſible, ſhe uſed frequently to lay her cheek upon the pillow, and kiſs his poor parched lips, as if ſhe wiſhed to catch the fever from him. O, madam! why were you not here to ſave her precious life?

Lady Harriet and I have been ſo much uſed to look up to her, with reſpect, as well as love (and ſure no human being ever deſerved them more) that we could not attempt to oppoſe her reſolution, farther than by fruitleſs intreaties, though we knew it muſt be hurtful to herſelf. Lady Lawſon was unfortunately gone upon a viſit, into Lincolnſhire, two days before my lord Woodville's accident; ſhe returned yeſterday, and is almoſt diſtracted at lady Woodville's illneſs. But what is her's, or any other perſons grief, to what my lord endures? no words can deſcribe his ſorrow; and I am convinced, if ſhe ſhould die, he never will recover.

He inſiſted on being taken out of bed this day, and carried to her chamber. Doctor Fenton finding him peremptory, conſented though reluctantly. Good God! what a pale and emaciated figure! Lady

Woodville at firſt did not know him: but when he ſpoke to her, ſhe ſtarted up, claſped her arms round his neck, and cried out with unnatural ſtrength! My deareſt lord! this, this is kind! ſhe ſhall not part us now! yes, we will go together; indeed I will not ſtay for any thing on earth; no not for *little Harry!*

Her ſpirits became quite exhauſted at theſe words, and ſhe ſunk down in a flood of tears. We thought lord Woodville would have expired on the inſtant He fainted, and was carried back to his chamber in that ſituation. This was the firſt time that lady Woodville had mentioned her *child* ſince my lord's illneſs.

The Doctor thinks it a good ſymptom, and would have the little cherubim brought into her ſight—but who can anſwer for the conſequence, if he ſhould catch the fever from her. At this moment, ſhe ſleeps, and lady Lawſon is determined to make the experiment, as ſoon as ſhe awakes.—God grant it may ſucceed!

I hope my little couſin has got the better of her ſad accident, and that I ſhall not hear from, but ſee you as ſoon as poſſible. I ſend this by a ſpecial meſſenger, and ſhall write every day till you come.

I am, dear lady Straffon,

Your afflicted and affectionate,

F. Weston.

LETTER LXXIX.

Lady Straffon, *To Miſs* Weston.

O FANNY! humbled in the duſt by the Almighty's chaſtening hand, I ſtrive in vain, to bow my heart to his all-wiſe decrees, and bleſs the arrow that inflicts the wound!

How

How have I vainly vaunted my own fortitude, and thought it proof againſt the ſevereſt trials! Perhaps it is to ſhew me my own weakneſs, that my loved ſiſter, and my child are doomed to ſuffer.—I fear there is impiety in that thought. Gracious heaven, look down on my diſtraction! The firſt, the tendereſt object of my youthful fondneſs, my Emily! my ſiſter! given to my care by a much honoured and a dying parent—for her I felt a mother's tenderneſs, a ſiſter's love! Why were the ties thus doubly twined around my ſad heart, if they muſt thus be broken! My daughter too, child of my wedded love! dear to me, for her father's ſake, as for my own—Both! both, my Emilys at once! Sure I may dare to ſay, the infliction is ſevere!

Nothing can be more alarming, than your account of my dear ſiſter's ſituation; I would fly to her this moment, but that my poor little girl is alſo in a fever——my heart is torn to pieces, for the two dear ſufferers; nor does lord Woodville want his ſhare of my compaſſion.—I will ſtill look up to the throne of mercy, and hope for the recovery of theſe dear, dear friends! Write to me, Fanny, every hour if poſſible: and, O! may your next bring comfort to

The truly afflicted,

F. STRAFFON.

P S Sir John returned here this morning, and is almoſt diſtracted.

LETTER LXXX.

Miſs WESTON, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

Dear Madam,

A Ray of conſolation beams upon us: lady Woodville's fever is abated; ſhe raves no more. The diſorder ſeems now to have fallen upon her nerves; and her extreme weakneſs is, at preſent, the principal ſource of our apprehenſions for her. When ſhe awoke out of the ſlumber ſhe was in, during my laſt letter, her recollection returned; ſhe knew lady Lawſon, and every perſon near her; but ſeemed particularly anxious to remember, what ſhe had ſaid to her lord; and expreſſed great uneaſineſs at doctor Fenton's having ſuffered him to run the hazard of leaving his chamber.

Lady Lawſon never quits her bed-ſide; and lady Harriet, who ſeems to have forgotten all her own diſtreſſes, hardly ever leaves my lord—I am a ſort of courier between both; and by flattering each in my accounts of the other, hope to forward both their recoveries. My lord expreſſes the ſtrongeſt impatience to ſee lady Woodville: doctor Fenton will not conſent to their meeting for ſome days, nor even ſuffer my lord's letters to be delivered to him. I am called to receive a viſitor—who can it be at this improper time?

What a flutter am I in? You would never gueſs who this gueſt was—Sir James Thornton! but ſo altered as I never ſaw any creature! I began to fear he was married; though what is it to me if he were? He has been poring his eyes out at Geneva ever ſince he left us; and looks as grave and as wiſe as an old profeſſor of philoſophy.

Do not be angry with me for trifling a little, my dear lady Straffon. I confeſs I was very glad to ſee him, and as lord and lady Woodville have had each of them a tolerable night, I think I may be allowed this ſmall indulgence. I have a preſentiment too,

that

that my couſin Emily is better.—In ſhort, every thing ſeems to wear a more chearful aſpect than it did yeſterday.

Poor Thornton was ſo much affected at his friend's illneſs that the tears ſtood in his eyes, and he offered up an ejaculation for their recovery, with almoſt as much devotion as your ladyſhip could, though he is juſt come from a place, where they ſay religion is not much in faſhion: but he is the beſt-natured creature breathing, and I am ſure he prayed from his heart.

He told me that a vexatious law-ſuit had brought him to England, and that he meant to have returned to Geneva without ſeeing lord Woodville or any of his friends; but being informed of the ſituation of this family, he had come from London on purpoſe to make the moſt minute inquiries,

He begged I would not let lord or lady Woodville know that he had been here; ſaid he would ſtay a couple of days at Sir William Lawſon's, in hopes of hearing they were out of danger, then return to town to purſue his law-ſuit, and as ſoon as that was over he would go back to Geneva—but I ſhall uſe my beſt crow-quill, to try to perſuade him to viſit Woodfort once more, before he croſſes the ſea again; and if I ſucceed in that, I may perhaps try a little farther.

This is the laſt expreſs that I ſhall ſend, as I hope by next poſt, to be able to give you a ſtill more ſatisfactory account of our dear, dear friends. Lady Woodville is very anxious about her niece.—I tel her, I hope with truth, that the ſweet little Emily is much better. I intreat you to confirm my aſſertion in your next; and to believe me,

Moſt affectionately your's,

F. Weston.

LETTER LXXXI.

Lady STRAFFON, *To Miſs* WESTON.

Dear FANNY.

THE manner more than the matter of your laſt letter, has been a cordial to my heart. You could not ſurely write in ſuch a chearful ſtrain, if our dear lady Woodville was in danger; and yet your account is by no means ſatisfactory; except where you ſay that her reaſon is returned, and that ſhe had a good night—your thoughts were diverted to another object, and your letter is confuſed. Pray be more explicit in your next.

I am very happy to be able to confirm your aſſertion, in favour of my child.—She is I thank God much better, though ſtill in a dangerous ſtate, as the bone of her leg knits ſlowly and ſhe ſuffers much, but though I may not be able to learn fortitude from her example, I have at leaſt acquired humility, from ſeeing that a natural mildneſs of diſpoſition can better enable us to ſupport the accidental miſeries of this life than all our boaſted reaſon and philoſophy.

I am aſhamed of the intemperate lamentations I made uſe of in my laſt letter; and I intreat you to burn it, if you have not already done ſo.

I ſhall continue to offer up my fervent prayers and wiſhes for the recovery of my dear ſiſter and her lord; and am, dear Fanny,

Sincerely your's,

F. STRAFFON.

LET-

LETTER LXXXII.

Miſs WESTON, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

UPON my word, my dear lady Straffon, if I had not very good news to ſend you, and was not very good natured, I do not think I ſhould write to you—how you huff one, for being glad to ſee an old acquaintance. If I did not know that your ladyſhip is married, I ſhould have thought your laſt letter had been written by an old maid: but I am ſo overjoyed, at being able to tell you that lady Woodville is infinitely better, that I cannot keep up my reſentment againſt you, any longer.

Yes, I am ſincerely glad too, that the little Emily has verified my prediction, and recovers daily.—— Now, do not expect me to be methodical, for I will never be ſo; no, nor will I burn the letter you deſire, for I really do not think there is any thing in it, that you need be aſhamed of.

Our affections are not given us intirely for our amuſement; they were certainly deſigned to make us feel our mutual dependance upon each other, and the total inſufficiency of individuals to create their own happineſs. They are the links, which form ſociety; and though, by being ſtretched, or broken, they may give us pain, I am certain that we could have no pleaſure without them.

I think I have got off of this ſubject very well, conſidering that this is my firſt *coup d'eſſai*, in the moralizing ſtrain. — Now for particulars — Lady Woodville ſat up two hours this day—She looks weak, and languid, but is, I really think, more beautiful than ever.

My lord wrote her a few lines, which I had the honour of preſenting to her; ſhe ſeemed tranſported with them, but, churl as ſhe is, ſhe did not let any body ſee them. The doctor would not permit her anſwer-

anſwering them till to-morrow.—If ſhe ſends her letter by me, I ſhall be mightily tempted to peep—but I will not—for I ſhould not like to be ſerved ſo myſelf; and I think that is the beſt way of determining all doubtful matters.

I ſaw Sir James Thornton again, laſt night—You ſee I mention him laſt, that you may not ſay he has diverted my thoughts from more intereſting ſubjects. He perſiſts in not having his viſits annonced to lord, or lady Woodville. I have promiſed to keep his ſecret, and write to him every poſt, till they are quite recovered. I ſhall begin my correſpondence this night; therefore,

Adieu, my dear lady Straffon.

F. Weston.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Miſs Weston, *To Lady* Straffon.

ENCORE, my dear lady Straffon! do not you really think me very good-natured? but this is now the houſe of joy; and we, poor things, who have no character of our own, camelion-like, catch the hue of our next neighbour.—No letter from you, by laſt poſt—but no matter. I have a little familiar, who tells me that Emily is better—thank you, good ſpirit for the pleaſing news—and now let me tell you, that lady Woodville is ſo much recovered, that doctor Fenton is to leave us to-morrow.

I think I ſhall be ſorry when he goes; he is a pure chatty man, and I have ſome reaſon to imagine, that he likes me vaſtly. Whenever I happen to be ſick, I will certainly ſend for him.

Well! matrimony is a fine thing, to be ſure! and it is very hard, that I, who am ſo well inclined to enter into that holy ſtate, cannot find an help-mate, meet for me. Though I have my doubts, whether there

there be many ſuch huſbands as lord Woodville. I declare he appears to be infinitely more in love with his wife, than he ever was. Such tender attention, ſuch unaffected fondneſs, I never beheld.—He is never out of her chamber, but when he is obliged to leave her to her repoſe, which ſeems now, to be perfectly uninterrupted.

Sir James Thornton is a better correſpondent, than your ladyſhip.—I received a letter from him, in anſwer to mine, with ſome very pretty compliments interſperſed through it, upon my eaſy manner of writing. Travelling, I find, has improved him; for I do not recollect that he ever ſaid a civil thing to me before he went abroad. *Better late than never*, is a good proverb. Poor lady Harriet! her ſpirits are very low, though ſhe has behaved ſurprizingly well, on Barnard's death; but I fear her calmneſs, on that occaſion, was owing to the alarming ſituation of lord and lady Woodville; and that her grief will return, with their health. I wiſh ſhe would think of marrying—a good huſband would make her forget Barnard. Dear, good Thornton! another letter from him, and more flattery! *quelle douceur! quel charme!* Adieu, my dear lady Straffon, I muſt indulge my vanity, this very moment, by ſhewing his epiſtle to lord and lady Woodville.

Your's, ever.

F. Weston.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Lady Straffon, *To Miſs* Weston.

THANK you, my good Fanny, for your two lively letters—they have been of infinite uſe to my poor weak ſpirits; and though I may not be able to compliment as agreeably as Sir James Thornton, I will venture to ſay that I am as well pleaſed

pleaſed as he, with the eaſe and chearfulneſs of your writing. I hope my heart is truly grateful to the Almighty, for the recovery of my dear ſiſter and her lord, as well as for the reſtoration of my little Emily, whom we now think paſt danger.

You ſay, very juſtly, that "our affections were not "given us, for amuſement." No, Fanny! they were meant to humble the proud heart; to ſhew us our own weakneſs, and fallibility, by our frequently beſtowing them on unworthy or improper objects; and even when directed by nature, and reaſon, into their right courſe, to all the tender charities of life, they ſhould remind us of our intire dependence, on the great Author of our being, by making us ſenſible that the moſt delightful attachments, which can be formed, by love, or friendſhip, ſerve but to enlarge our vulnerary part, and encreaſe our capacity of feeling pain.

You, perhaps, may think this moral too ſevere; but it is not meant to reſtrain us from the indulgence of thoſe fond ſenſations, which are natural to every good heart, but to raiſe our gratitude, to the great Giver of all our bleſſings, and to remind us, that we hold them, by grant, from his bounty, and not from any right, or merit of our own.

As my Emily gains ſtrength, every day, we purpoſe going into Eſſex, in a ſhort time; and ſo ſoon as Sir John can ſettle ſome neceſſary affairs there, we ſhall all ſet out for Briſtol in hopes of meeting lord and lady Woodville there.—What a joyful meeting will it be to me! my eyes run over at the delightful idea.

Though lady Mount Willis took every precaution, to conceal her generoſity to Sir James Miller from himſelf, the unhappy man has diſcovered that he is indebted to her for his ſubſiſtence, and has written her a moſt affecting letter, acknowledging his own unworthineſs, and intreating her to withdraw her bounty, as he declares he could better ſupport the moſt abject poverty, than the receiving of favours from one, whom he had ſo highly injured and offended.

fended. There is ſomething in this ſentiment that inclines me to forgive, even his former baſeneſs, and to pity his preſent miſery. Sure there can be nothing ſo truly humiliating as receiving obligations, from thoſe we have wronged.

I ſincerely wiſh that your epiſtolary correſpondence with Sir James Thornton may anſwer all your expectation.—But, remember, Fanny, that flattery coſts men nothing; and that women are apt to over-rate it, and frequently beſtow their love and eſteem in exchange for what has no intrinſic worth.—I grant that in the general commerce of the world, the perſon whoſe politeneſs and attention are moſt marked to us, deſervedly obtains a preference in our regard: vanity is in ſome degree inherent to all human kind, and the being rated above our fellows, is a ſpecies of flattery, which the moſt delicate creature in the world is never offended at. But in a particular intercourſe between man and woman, we ſhould take great care, that our own ſelf-love does not impoſe upon us, and magnify the common forms or expreſſions of politeneſs into a particular addreſs.—Do not be angry, at this hint, Fanny, as it is only meant to ſave your vanity, for I hope your heart is not yet concerned, from the mortification of a diſappointment.

Tell my dear lady Woodville, that I moſt impatiently long for a line from her, and that I mutually congratulate her-lord, and her on their recovery.

I am, dear Fanny,

Your's ſincerely,

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER LXXV.

Lady WOODVILLE, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

WHERE, Fanny, ſhall I find words to expreſs my gratitude to the *Almighty*, for the bleſſings I have received from him? the ſmalleſt of which, is

my

my own recovery from the grave! Words are inadequate to what I feel, but *He* can read my heart! Life is a common bleſſing given to all; and ſure there was a time, now not long paſt, when I would moſt willingly have yielded mine, into *His* hands that gave it—but happineſs, my ſiſter! ſuch bliſs as mine, is but the lot of few. O how ſhall I deſerve it! teach me Fanny; teach me every honeſt art, to keep the treaſure I have ſo lately found—lord Woodville's heart.

How little, alas! are we capable of judging for ourſelves? my lord's late illneſs, which I conſidered as the ſevereſt infliction of Providence, has been the bleſſed means of all my preſent and I hope future happineſs! His generous nature, ſtruck with the ſufferings I endured, by one rich gift, has overpaid them all—but I muſt not, dare not enter into the charming detail of my felicity—my ſpirits will not bear it, but you ſhall know it all. For the preſent let it ſuffice to tell you, I have not now a wiſh ungratified, but that of being able to render myſelf worthy of the happineſs I enjoy.

My lord, lady Harriet, who is a mirror of reſignation, and Fanny Weſton, all join with me in ſincere congratulations to you, and Sir John, on Emily's recovery. How truly thankful ought I to be, for the dear child's preſervation! for indeed, I could not have been happy, had you been otherways.

Adieu, my Fanny, I am as ever,

Your's,

E. Woodville.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVI.

Miſs WESTON, *To Lady* STRAFFON.

[Incloſed in the foregoing.]

I Hope your ladyſhip will believe me perfectly ſincere, when I tell you that I rejoice at lady Woodville's being able to releaſe me from the office of her ſecretary, by anſwering for herſelf. For though I am highly ſenſible of the great honour, which your ladyſhip confers upon ſuch a mad-cap as me, by condeſcending to write to me, I muſt beg leave to obſerve *que la roſe a ſes picque* – for indeed, your ladyſhip's kind and friendly admonitions upon the ſubject of Sir James Thornton's politeneſs, and my vanity are rather humiliating. But in order to make your mind, as well as my own eaſy, upon this ſubject, I will venture to aſſure you, that I ſhall require ſtronger proofs of Sir James Thornton's regard, than a little flimſy flattery, before I ſuffer my ſelf-love to perſuade me, that the baronet is enamoured of your ladyſhip's moſt humble ſervant,

F. WESTON.

P. S. Pray, my dear lady Straffon, do not fancy I am in a huff, for I never was in greater harmony of ſpirits than at preſent; having this moment, received a letter from Sir James Thornton, in anſwer to an invitation, which lord and lady Woodville commiſſioned me to make, and which he will accept in a few days. It is lucky that flattery *coſts men nothing*, for the poor dear baronet would certainly be a bankrupt, if he were to purchaſe all that he beſtows upon

Your ever affectionate,

F. W.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVII.

Lady STRAFFON, *To Lady* WOODVILLE.

LIKE the rich gales from the Arabian coaſt, my Emily's laſt letter came fraught with health and joy.—What an high cordial muſt it have been to a fond ſiſter's heart, who long has mourned, without affecting to perceive, thoſe ſecret ſorrows, which ſhe could not heal, to hear that they, at length are vaniſhed?

I know not which of us is, at preſent, happieſt; but were the charming conteſt to be determined, by the merit of the competitors, the precious palm would be adjudged to you. Long may my Emily enjoy the triumph, ſhe ſo well deſerves!

I will not, cannot, wait for a detail of your felicity; I will behold and ſhare it.—It is poſſible to be circumſtantial, under the ſevereſt affliction; but happineſs is, by much, too volatile for narrative—like a fine and ſubtle eſſence, it evaporates through the activity of its own ſpirit; we cannot paint the expreſſive looks, which are lighted up by a glad heart; the *eye* alone can catch the brilliant beam, which brightens by reflection.—Therefore expect to meet *mine*, in leſs than four-and-twenty hours after you receive this. Sir John and my girl will accompany me.

I have had a very pleaſing letter from lady Somerville.—Lodovico, Laura and ſhe, arrived ſafely at Genoa; her friends received them all, with open hearts and arms.—The young people have been intirely taken up with feaſts, balls and maſquerades. To avoid giving offence, by refuſing to partake in theſe amuſements, lady Somerville has retired to the very houſe, which ſhe quitted upon her marriage, which is twenty leagues from Genoa.—She there continues to indulge that melancholy, which time has been only able to ſoften, not ſubdue—amiable relict!

Tel-

Tell Fanny Weſton that the preſent harmony of my ſpirits prevents my anſwering her letter as I ought; but ſhe muſt not flatter herſelf that I do not mean to take any farther notice of it; for the moment I become acquainted with Sir. James Thornton, I will inſiſt upon his deviſing a proper puniſhment for her pertneſs, and he ſhall be at once the judge and executioner.

Adieu, my dear Emily: I quit you with pleaſure, at *this* moment, to haſten *that* of our meeting.

F. STRAFFON.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

THE apprehenſions which my dear Seymour expreſſes, on account of my ſilence have been but too well founded —I have been upon the verge of "that undiſcovered country, from whoſe bourn no "traveller returns" But how do I now rejoice at not having paſſed the irremediable bounds, in a ſtate of inſenſibility to the virtues of my now truly dear, and I hope happy wife! She is an angel, Seymour!

I know what true delight theſe words will give you; they are ſincere, my friend—they flow from my full heart. Blinded as I have been to her perfections, you will ſurely pardon the tranſports of a man, who waking from a dream of miſery, finds himſelf in Elyſium—ſuch is my preſent ſtate; what was my former one, you, and you only, know too well.

You are, doubtleſs impatient to hear what has wrought this happy change; with pleaſure will I dwell on every circumſtance, that muſt endear my Emily to my heart, and render her ſtill more amiable in my friend's eyes.

It

It is now above two months ſince I received your firſt account of Ransford's duel, and the marchioneſs's diſtreſs. No words can paint the ſtrong emotions of my mind—a thouſand various ſchemes to ſuccour her, ruſhed inſtantly through my diſturbed imagination. My wife was preſent while I read your letter, and ſaw the agitation of my mind.—Her delicacy prompted her to retire; I prevented her, and told her, I know not how, of Barnard's death, and begged her to inform lady Harriet of it in the tendereſt manner—needleſs caution.

I then told her I would go and acquaint Sir Harry Ransford with the affair; and ordered my horſes to be got ready immediately.

I ſet out directly on that purpoſe—but before I had rode a quarter of a mile, a ſudden impulſe ſeized me, a certain foreign and irreſiſtible force, that impelled me to fly to the inſtant relief of the marchioneſs.

The baſeneſs and madneſs of ſuch a reſolve, ſprang forward to my view at the ſame moment, but the paſſions triumphed, as they always muſt do, at the firſt onſet over the feebler reaſon.

I conſidered, that Ransford might probably call me to account, for interfering in his affairs; and I felt a kind of gloomy ſatisfaction, in thinking that the loſs of life might be deemed an atonement, for the cruelty of my conduct towards Emily.

I then traverſed the road, in order to return home through my park, and got into my cloſet unperceived by any of my family.

I there took out the marchioneſs's picture and hung it round my neck, as a kind of taliſman, againſt that remorſe which I muſt certainly feel, for abandoning my wife. I then ſat down and wrote a letter to my Emily; and though at that time under the influence of the ſtrongeſt delirium, I am pleaſed and proud to own, that my tears flowed faſter than my ink, while I reflected on the pain which ſhe muſt ſuffer when ſhe read thoſe lines.—I reſolved to travel

night

night and day, and not to put my letter into the poſt-office till I came to Canterbury.

As I was ſtepping out of my library, which you know looks into the parterre, I ſaw my little boy at play, cloſe by the window with his maid.——The ſight of my ſon, ſtartled me.——The order of nature ſeemed reverſed——The child admoniſhing the parent. I felt all this, but felt myſelf at the ſame time, like one in a dream labouring under an impreſſion of the imagination, without reaſon to correct, or free-will to controul it. I could not paſs into the park without being ſeen by them;—the private manner of my return would have alarmed the family. I was aſhamed to be detected by my ſervant, and ſpent above an hour, which appeared a ſummer's day to me, in a ſtate of the moſt reſtleſs impatience. I have ſince thought, that this little accident ſeemed as if kindly deſigned by Providence to give me time for reflection. But alas! the delay quickened the vehemence of my purpoſe to purſue my ſcheme.

The moment I was at liberty, I flew back to the park, bid my ſervants follow me and ſet off with all the ſpeed my horſe could make.—But I had not got three miles from my own demeſne, when by ſome *fortunate* accident my horſe made a falſe ſtep, which he was incapable of recovering, and threw me ſenſeleſs to the ground.

How long I continued there, or what paſſed, during an interval of one-and-twenty days, has left no trace upon my memory; at the end of that period I awaked, as from unquiet reſt.—Gracious heaven! how ſhall I ever be able to expreſs my aſtoniſhment at beholding lady Woodville ſeated by my bed-ſide, the ſtatue of deſpair; pale, wan, and faded was her youthful cheek, her eyes were raiſed to heaven, as if in fervent, though in hopeleſs prayer! O, Seymour! what a train of horrid images broke in at once upon my burning brain; my unſettled reaſon fluttered on the wing, and ſeemed as if it would depart again for ever.

The

The ſtriking object that appeared before me, impreſſed my ſenſes with a kind of awe; yet I had power to ſpeak to her! ſhe could not anſwer---A flood of tears, but they were tears of joy, ſuppreſſed the power of ſpeech. She was carried out of the room by doctor Fenton's orders, and I then feigned a ſlumber, in hopes that recollection would afford ſome clue to lead me through the labyrinth of my ſituation.

The firſt circumſtance that preſented itſelf to my memory, was, my having quitted Woodfort with a deſign of abandoning that amiable creature, whom I now beheld reduced to the ſtate I have already deſcribed, by her tenderneſs for me;—the next thing that occurred to me, was my having had the marchioneſs's picture round my neck, which I now ſearched for in vain.—I inſtantly ordered every perſon to leave the room except Williams, and demanded from him an account of my preſent ſituation, and what was become of the picture which I had placed next my heart? I could have no doubt of his faith or ſincerity—he has lived with me ever ſince I was a *child*, and loved me as if I had been *his*.

He fell upon his knees, by my bedſide, and begged me not to hurry, or exhauſt my ſpirits, which he was ſure muſt be extremely weak, as this was the firſt moment the fever had left me, for one-and-twenty days; during which time, he told me lady Woodville had never quitted my apartment for a ſingle hour, nor cloſed her lovely eyes.

That on the night I was brought home, the ſurgeon had me ſtripped, in order to know if I had received any wound or bruiſe in my body; that he had taken off the picture, and given it to my wife, ſuppoſing it to be hers; that at that time ſhe took no notice of it, but that he had often ſince ſeen her gaze upon it moſt intently, and ſigh as if her heart would break.

He ſaid that Thomas had alſo brought her the papers which were found in my pockets; and ſhe gave them all to him, to lock up; but that Mrs. Winter,

Winter, her woman, who was preſent, told her ladyſhip there was a letter ſealed and directed for her, which ſhe then took, and left the room.

That ſhe returned in a few minutes as pale as death, but never diſcloſed the contents; though Mrs. Winter took as much pains as ſhe dared to find them out, as ſhe could not conceive what I could have to ſay to lady Woodville, when I had but juſt left her.

He told me, Seymour, that Emily has knelt by my bedſide for hours in ſpeechleſs agony; has kiſſed my feveriſh lips, and bathed my burning hands with her moſt precious tears; and yet ſhe knew I had inhumanly determined to forſake her! to leave ſuch worth as hers a prey to pining grief and diſcontent! For whom?—You have too juſtly named her the moſt unworthy of her ſex.

You may ſuppoſe that during William's recital, my reaſon tottered in its feeble ſeat; but I had ſtill enough left to rouſe my ſlumbering virtue, and to reſolve that if I ſhould recover, my future life ſhould be devoted to love, to gratitude, to Emily. This bear me witneſs, heaven! I had determined before I knew, or even thought it poſſible I ever ſhould deſpiſe the marchioneſs.

As ſoon as I had heard all that Williams had to ſay, I begged to ſee my wife. Doctor Fenton abſolutely refuſed my requeſt. I acquieſced upon his telling me ſhe had lain down to reſt.

The next day I repeated my intreaties without ſucceſs.—On the third, I became ſo impatient, that Williams thought it moſt prudent to let me know the ſad truth, which every one elſe concealed from me, which was, that lady Woodville lay dangerouſly ill of the fever ſhe had caught from me.

I was no longer ſenſible of my own weak ſtate.—The tumult of my paſſions gave me a momentary ſtrength.—I ruſhed out of bed upon the *inſtant*; never, Seymour, did I experience ſuch *another!* All lady Woodville's merits, which I had before but coldly admired, appeared to me now in the warmeſt colours,

colours, and roſe even to perfection. But when contraſted with my ingratitude towards her, they overcame me.—I ſunk into my ſervant's arms, and ſhed a flood of tears.

In ſpite of all oppoſition I would be carried into my wife's apartment.—I had reſolved to implore her pity and forgiveneſs for my paſt follies, and to aſſure her of my future conduct, which I could no longer entertain a doubt of; as the ſincere and tender affection I then felt for her, would, I hoped, enſure her happineſs, and that I ſhould date mine from her recovery.

Think of my ſituation, Seymour, when I approached her bedſide——ſhe was delirious! yet the dear angel knew me though ſhe raved, and in ſuch terms, that her words ſtruck daggers to my heart.—My ſtrength forſook me; I fainted, and was carried back to my own chamber, the unhappieſt wretch that breathed upon the earth.

In pity to you I will draw a veil over the wild ravings of my tortured mind, and make you happy by telling you that I am truly ſo, by knowing that my deareſt Emily is out of danger.

This letter has been the work of two days; to-morrow I am to ſee my wife.—I count the moments, Seymour, and think them hours till then!

I have heard that perſons who have been once mad, never recover the perfect uſe of their reaſon; or at leaſt, are liable to ſome returns of inſanity. This thought ſhocks me! for if I could ſuppoſe it poſſible I ſhould ever again ſink into that ſhameful, that now deteſted delirium, which ſo long poſſeſſed me, I would not wiſh to live another hour—but it is impoſſible.—My Emily's virtues have ſubdued my heart, and time inſtead of leſſening, muſt increaſe their power.

It is high time that I ſhould condole with you, on the ſufferings you have endured from your generous friendſhip towards the marchioneſs. The meanneſs of her behaviour to you, makes me rejoice in the hope of her not being Ranſford's wife.

—Yet

—Yet contemptible as her conduct has made her appear even in my once-partial eyes, ſhe muſt not know diſtreſs, I mean with regard to her circumſtances: and while Sir Harry Ransford lives, it will not be in his ſon's power to ſupport her in the rank which ſhe has held for ſome years paſt.—Let me therefore intreat you to inform me of the event of her law-ſuit with the marquis of St. Aumont.

Be not alarmed at this requeſt, Seymour. It is not paſſion, but compaſſion, that makes me wiſh to ſerve her; for I here ſolemnly declare, that if I were not certain of having intirely conquered the phrenſy, which had ſo long poſſeſſed my enfeebled reaſon, I have ſtill virtue enough left to reſtrain myſelf from ever mentioning her name. But the real luſtre of my Emily's virtues, have triumphed over the falſe glare of Iſabella's charms, that fatal *ignis fatuus*, which ſo long dazzled and miſled my benighted ſenſes.

I ſincerely rejoice in your fair veſtal's recovery;—may ſhe live to make you as happy, as your uncommon ſituation will admit.

I am truly concerned for Ransford, and earneſtly wiſh to know what courſe he has purſued.—I think with you, that he is now in Switzerland; and ſuppoſe he has written to you before this time. What is become of lady Ransford? But I forget that you were prevented from ſeeing her, before you left Paris.

Adieu, my friend;—let me once more congratulate you upon my Emily's recovery, and my own reſtoration, to more than life!

I am moſt truly your's.

WOODVILLE.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

THE wiſhed-for, the charming interview is over! but where, Seymour, ſhall I find words to expreſs the delicacy of my Emily's conduct? when I would have fallen at her feet, and implored her to forgive my having made her miſerable, ſhe caught me in her arms, with that modeſt ſenſibility, which accompanies her every action, and ſaid that all the miſery ſhe had ever ſuffered, aroſe from conſidering herſelf as the fatal, though innocent cauſe of my unhappineſs.

That ſhe ſhould ever be truly grateful for the pains I had taken to prevent her being wretched, by endeavouring to conceal a paſſion which ſhe was ſure it was as impoſſible for me to conquer, as it had been to diſguiſe.

That ſhe had long known of my attachment to the marchioneſs, and that her utmoſt wiſh, for many months paſt, was to be conſidered as my firſt friend; that ſhe ſhould never make an improper uſe of my confidence, but that her utmoſt tenderneſs ſhould be exerted to ſoothe the ſorrows, which ſhe could not heal.——A flood of tears oppoſed her farther utterrance.

I took that opportunity of aſſuring her, that it was in her power, and hers alone, to render me the happieſt of men.

She wiped away her tears, and gazed on me, with looks of joy and doubt. Let not your kindneſs, ſaid ſhe, tempt you to deceive me. I feel too well, the impoſſibility of conquering a fond, a real paſſion! but I will ſtrive, my lord.

I caught her trembling hand, and preſſed it to my lips. O no! I cried, my Emily! my love! indulge your virtuous fondneſs, and deeply as my heart appears to be indebted to you, like a poor bankrupt,

bankrupt, it ſhall give its all, though it can never pay you what it owes.—She quick exclaimed, O I am overpaid in this bleſſed moment, for years of miſery! your heart! but can you give it? is it yours, my lord? No, Emily! unworthy as it is, it is already yours, and ſhall be ever ſo.

Tears and embraces cloſed this charming ſcene; and now with truth, my Seymour, I can boaſt, I never knew what heart-felt rapture was before that hour.

The conferring happineſs, on any creature, is certainly the higheſt enjoyment, of any human mind; but the paying it to an amiable, and deſerving object, muſt heighten the ſentiment, even to tranſport.

Sir James Thornton has been obliged to return to England, on account of a law-ſuit. He purpoſed keeping himſelf concealed, but upon hearing of mine, or rather my Emily's illneſs, he poſted down from London, to Sir William Lawſon's, and remained there till ſhe was pronounced out of danger. Since that time, he has had frequent accounts of our recovery, from Fanny Weſton, with whom he correſponds in a very gallant ſtile.

I know *ſhe* likes the young baronet, and as I flatter myſelf he is cured of his hopeleſs paſſion, for lady Woodville, or at leaſt, am well aſſured that he will never preſume to purſue it, I have prevailed upon my wife, to conſent to his making us a viſit; but neither his being at Woodfort, nor any thing elſe, ſhall prevent our going to Briſtol in a few days; for though my lovely invalid is ſurprizingly recovered from her late illneſs, the ſhock which her conſtitution has received, has rendered it almoſt as delicate, as her charming mind. I will watch over them both, and hope to reſtore them to their natural ſtate, which is almoſt perfection.

I have ſhewn Emily all your letters, and told her the ſtory of my connection with the marchioneſs, without concealing a ſingle circumſtance which

paſſed, either at Paris or York. During my narrative, "I often did beguile her of her tears," they flowed ſincerely, when I informed her of the ſtruggles, of my then tortured mind.

I well knew that the confeſſion of my paſt weakneſs, muſt give her pain; but I was certain ſhe would receive it as the ſtrongeſt mark of my preſent ſincerity. The tenderneſs and delicacy of her expreſſions, upon this trying ſubject, have, if poſſible, raiſed her in my eſteem, by convincing me that her underſtanding is as excellent, as her heart; and that her mind and perſon conſtitute a treaſure almoſt too great for the moſt worthy man. Senſible as I am of my own demerits, can I ever be ſufficiently grately for ſuch a bleſſing? but I will endeavour to deſerve it, Seymour, by devoting every hour of my future life to her happineſs.

Since the recovery of my reaſon, I have received infinite pleaſure from playing with my little boy. How could I be inſenſible to the natural and innocent endearments of ſuch a lovely creature? but I find happineſs and pleaſure crouding in upon me, through a thouſand avenues, that my delirium had rendered impervious to their ſoft attacks; and I begin to think that I have been *new formed*, as well as *reformed*, ſince my redemption.

Lady Woodville, who is ſincerely grateful for your kind attachment to her, entreats you will at your return to Paris, endeavour to find out Sir James Miller, and purchaſe for him, either a commiſſion, employment, or annuity, which may be ſufficient for his ſupport, as the unhappy man has abſolutely refuſed to accept lady Mount Willis's bounty, from the moment he diſcovered that it was to her he owed it. There is ſomething like greatneſs of mind in this circumſtance, which renders him an intereſting object. What mixtures are we compounded of! You may gueſs your paymiſtreſs *incog.*

I impa-

I impatiently long for the pleaſure of hearing from you, and am with the warmeſt affection of friendſhip,

Ever yours,

WOODVILLE.

LETTER XC.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

My dear WOODVILLE,

THIS letter will probably reach England, but a few days before the writer of it; but I would not for a moment delay pouring forth my acknowledgments, for the ſincere pleaſure I have received from your two laſt letters; and my warmeſt congratulations on the charming ſubject of them.

Yes, thank Heaven, my friend is reſtored to life, to reaſon, and to happineſs! can Seymour ſigh, while he repeats that ſound. O Woodville! my cup has been ſeverely daſhed with ſorrow, nor has there ever yet one joy unmixed, e'er reached my heart. Yet let me not complain; my own imprudence formed the fatal web, that has enſnared my peace; the unhappy duel that I fought with captain Beaumont ſealed its ruin!

But why ſhould I diſtreſs you, by tracing my misfortunes to their ſource; it is too much for you to know, that I am wretched—no matter from what cauſe.

The length of time that has elapſed ſince my laſt letter to you, has been fertile of ſad events; which I ſhall relate to you, in as ſuccinct a manner as I can.

When I had been about a week at Belleveüe, the good old general was attacked with a diſorder in his ſtomach, which had moſt alarming ſymptoms. He was ſenſible of his ſituation, but ſeemed to wiſh to conceal it from his children, who vied with each other in their tenderneſs and affliction for him. It is impoſſible to do juſtice to their merits, or deſcribe the affecting ſcene.

At the end of twelve days he expired, and left the moſt diſconſolate family I ever beheld: but Charlotte's grief ſurpaſſed even credibility. Neither her brother, ſiſter, nor I, could prevail upon her to leave the chamber where the body lay, till the moment it was to be interred. She paſſed the nights and days, in prayers and tears.—Judge what I ſuffered from my apprehenſions for her.

As ſoon as the funeral was over, ſhe requeſted that we would indulge her with the liberty of paſſing a few days without interruption in her chamber. We had no right to treſpaſs on her grief; but yet our fears for her too delicate conſtitution, made us reluctantly comply with her deſire.

On the fourth evening of her retirement ſhe ſent for madame de Carignan, who flew to obey her ſummons, but returned in a few minutes, to captain Beaumont and me, and with an air of diſtraction, cried out, our miſeries are but begun, O haſten quickly, or her angelick ſpirit will be fled! And can I paint the ſad, the ſolemn ſcene! no, Woodville, no! it will live for ever, graved upon my heart—but words would wrong my feelings.

Charlotte! my once beloved, my now adored and ſainted maid! ſighed out her ſoul to heaven.

Grief will not kill us, Woodville, or I ſhould not ſurvive to tell her death——I can no more,

Adieu, my friend.

SEYMOUR.

LET-

LETTER XCI.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

My dear WOODVILLE,

IT was impoſſible for me to have added another word to my laſt letter. I have but a very few more to ſay with regard to the Beaumont family: and then the dear, the fatal name ſhall no more paſs my lips, but remain treaſured up in my ſad heart, a precious hoard for everlaſting grief to brood upon.

I told you in ſome of my former letters, that captain Beaumont viſited me every day, during my confinement in the Chatelet. He there beheld and became enamoured of the fair Maria D'Angueville. When he had been about ten days at Belleveüe, he acquainted me with his paſſion, and intreated me to ſpeak to his father upon the ſubject. Accident prevented my having an opportunity of obeying him, till the general's illneſs rendered it improper---and the real affliction which he has ſince felt, ſeemed to have quenched the new enkindled flame.

But a few days after our return to Paris, he again re-aſſumed the ſubject, and begged me to apply to his fair couſin and his uncle, for leave to pay his addreſſes to her. I told him truly, that the ſituation of my mind rendered me totally unfit to be the ambaſſador of love or joy; but that I was determined before I ſhould leave Paris, to pay a viſit at the Chatelet, to return thanks for the humane and generous treatment I had met with from the governor and his family, and to intreat Maria's acceptance of the legacy which her uncle the general had bequeathed me of twenty thouſand livres.

I thought that captain Beaumont appeared diſpleaſed at my intention; as he coolly replied, that he did not want a fortune with his wife, and thought I had better beſtow the legacy I did not chuſe to accept, upon ſome of the younger children of the family, who might poſſibly ſtand in need of my boun-

ty. I told him that Maria's likeneſs to his beloved ſiſter, had made her the principal object of my preſent attention, and that I would put it in her power to diſpoſe of the ſum in queſtion, as ſhe thought proper.

Soon after this converſation the captain withdrew, and I remained for ſeveral days ſo entirely abſorbed in my grief, that I reflected not upon the unkindneſs of my friend's conduct, who neither came nor ſent to me for near a fortnight.

At length, he entered my chamber one morning without being announced, and found me gazing ſo intently upon Charlote's picture, that I ſaw him not till he exclaimed, with a voice of diſtraction, what unmerited affliction and diſtreſs has the unhappy Seymour brought on all the Beaumont race?

Though the ſeverity of this reproach might have rouſed my reſentment at another time, I was ſo much ſoftened by the object then before me, my angel Charlotte's face! that, burſting into tears, I anſwered---O Beaumont! cannot grief like this, atone for my involuntary crimes? and does my friend upbraid my miſery?

At theſe words he ruſhed into my arms and cried, forgive me, Seymour. Then ſtarted wildly from me and went on---but wherefore flow theſe tears upon a ſenſeleſs object, loſt and forgotten in the grave, when there is now a fairer and a kinder maid ready to heal your ſorrows.

I could not avoid expreſſing my aſtoniſhment at this unintelligible diſcourſe, and it was a long time before he explained himſelf, by telling me, that the lovely and innocent Maria D'Angueville had conceived a paſſion for me, during the time I remained a priſoner in the Chatelet; and that upon being preſſed by her father and mother to receive her couſin's hand, ſhe had declared, that ſhe would rather paſs her days in a cloiſter than with any other man but lord Seymour. I was extremely affected with this intelligence, as it concerned my friend, the unhappy girl, and my own honour.

I aſſured

I aſſured captain Beaumont, that I never had ſpoken to her upon the ſubject of love, or made the leaſt attempt to gain her affections; and that I was ready to do every thing in my power to aſſiſt in conquering Maria's weak partiality to me, that might not injure her delicacy or my own character.

The frankneſs and ſincerity of my manner, ſoon got the better of his ill-grounded ſuſpicions; he aſked my pardon a thouſand times, for having entertained a doubt of my affection to his dear dead ſiſter; but hoped, as I had been myſelf a lover, I would forgive his raſhneſs.

It was at laſt agreed upon between us, that I ſhould write to Maria directly, and acquaint her with the real ſtate of my heart, which muſt be for ever incapable of love for any earthly object; that I ſhould not ſee her before I left Paris; and at my ſetting out, ſhould take an everlaſting leave of her by letter. That neither her father, nor any other perſon ſhould preſs her to marry, till time and reaſon might enable her to triumph over a paſſion which oppoſition would certainly increaſe. That captain Beaumont would continue his aſſiduities, without mentioning his love.---That ſhe ſhould not know of the preſent I deſigned her, till a year was elapſed; but if at that time, ſhe refuſed to marry captain Beaumont, I ſhould be at liberty to put her in poſſeſſion of the twenty thouſand livres, and that ſhe ſhould be allowed to diſpoſe of them as ſhe pleaſed.

This affair thus ſettled, my friend took his leave with a thouſand acknowledgments for what he called a ſacrifice, and I ſat down to fulfil my promiſe of writing to Maria---when Wilſon announced a very unexpected viſitor; it was madame de St. Far, the marchioneſs's mother, whom I had never ſeen or heard of ſince the time that you firſt became acquainted with her daughter.

She was then, you may recollect, an agreeable figure, rather comely than handſome, and plumper than the generality of her country-women. She is

now emaciated to a ſkeleton, and I could not help feeling ſome apprehenſions, that ſhe would expire before ſhe left my apartment, as ſhe was frequently much agitated during the time ſhe ſtaid.

She told me, that her daughter had ſuffered her to want even the common neceſſaries of life, and had abſolutely refuſed to ſee her from the moment ſhe became a widow. Though I deteſt the marchioneſs, I could not avoid obſerving to madame de St. Far, that I imagined the firſt part of her accuſation, muſt be unjuſt, as ſhe had formerly appeared in the world, as a woman of fortune; and therefore muſt certainly be able to ſupport herſelf independant of her daughter's bounty.

She told me I was much deceived, and as ſhe had no longer any terms to keep with the ungrateful marchioneſs, ſhe would reveal her real ſituation.---She then informed me, that ſhe had lived for ſeveral years with a monſieur de Verville at Dijon, by whom ſhe had Iſabella; that at length by the perſuaſion of his friends, monſieur de Verville determined to marry, and parted with her and her daughter; but allowed them a decent ſupport, and took every proper care of his child's education.

That as ſhe grew up extremely handſome, madame de St. Far determined to bring her to Paris, in hopes of making her fortune; and for that purpoſe aſſumed the name ſhe now uſed, and endeavoured to appear like a perſon of diſtinction. That the marchioneſs was perfectly acquainted with their circumſtances, and readily entered into the ſcheme; but in order to carry it on, ſhe was obliged to run conſiderably in debt, though they were not above ſix months in Paris, before the marchioneſs had the good fortune to charm both you and the marquis de St. Aumont.

She added, that the only reaſon her daughter ever gave for preferring the marquis to you, was the probability of becoming her own miſtreſs by his death, for that ſhe knew her own diſpoſition ſo perfectly,

fectly, that ſhe was certain ſhe could not confine her affections to any one perſon long.

O Woodville! what an happy eſcape have you had from this vile woman! but to make an end of this tedious tale. She told me, that monſieur de Verville died without a will, ſoon after the marchioneſs's marriage; and that ſhe was by that means, deprived even of the ſmall income which he had allowed her. She implored me to aſſiſt her in getting into ſome convent where ſhe might paſs the remainder of her days without hearing of her undutiful and unnatural daughter. I have deſired her to fix upon a proper place for her retirement, and I will readily pay the ſum neceſſary to her admiſſion. I preſented her with my purſe, and deſired to hear from her as ſoon as poſſible.

This affair, and lady Woodville's commands to find out Sir James Miller will detain me a few days longer in Paris. How earneſtly do I long to quit it? yet are not all places alike to the unhappy! no, there is one aſylum, and but one, for wretchedneſs like mine--the peaceful grave!

Forgive me, Woodville, for talking in this melancholy ſtrain, to my now happy friend---may you belong ſo is the warmeſt wiſh of

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I know not whether I told you that I have ſought lady Ransford in vain, ever ſince my return to Paris. She quitted her hôtel in a few days after Barnard's death, and has left no trace behind her.

LET-

LETTER XCII.

Lord WOODVILLE, *To Lord* SEYMOUR.

My dear SEYMOUR,

YOUR remark, that neither happineſs, nor pleaſure can come to us unmixed, is but too aptly verified in me; for the real and tender concern which your ſituation gives me, is a ſtrong alloy to that tranquil happineſs I ſhould at preſent enjoy, if the friend of my heart were not wretched!---There is ſomething ſo uncommonly diſtreſsful in your circumſtances, that to attempt to leſſen your affliction would be an inſult to humanity;---for who that has a heart to feel another's loſs, would wiſh to ſtop the graceful tears that flow, "where "reaſon, and where virtue o'er the tomb, are fel-"low mourners.

I am ſorry for captain Beaumont's diſappointment in love, but I have infinitely more pity for the young and innocent Maria. You and I both know how difficult it is to ſtruggle with the firſt fond impreſſions of the heart; and women in general, from a principle of delicacy are much more inclined than men, to cheriſh their firſt paſſion, even when hope is fled.

I have a melancholy proof of this truth too near me---poor lady Harriet Hanbury! She ſtill laments the unworthy Barnard, and I fear will ſoon follow him to an untimely grave ---While Sir James Thornton ſeems to have transferred the paſſion he felt for lady Woodville to Miſs Weſton, who kindly receives his vows, and will, I hope, ſoon crown his wiſhes.

I cannot help being extremely ſhocked at the infamous conduct of the marchioneſs towards her mother.---Why need we become volunteers in vice? Our paſſions but too ſtrongly and frequently impel us to break the bounds preſcribed by virtue; but

then

then thoſe paſſions may, I humbly hope, in ſome degree, alleviate our tranſgreſſions; but her unnatural behaviour to the unhapyy woman who gave her birth, admits of no extenuation. This could not have proceeded from any paſſion, and muſt therefore be a double vice.

I am however much better pleaſed to owe my cure to Emily's virtues, than to Iſabella's vices, as the knowledge of the former are a perpetual ſource of happineſs to me, while the diſcovery of the latter, muſt for ever reflect on my own weakneſs, in being ſo groſsly deceived.

Madame de St. Far's eſtabliſhment in the convent, muſt not be at your expence. My Emily! my lovely generous girl! inſiſts on paying her penſion. She muſt not be refuſed whatever ſhe deſires, by Woodville, or his friend.

I moſt impatiently long for your return to England; I wiſh you would meet us at Briſtol, where we purpoſe going in a few days: for though my Emily is ſo much recovered, that neither her phyſician nor herſelf think ſhe has occaſion to drink the waters, I will not be ſatisfied, unleſs ſhe does; as I flatter myſelf they may aſſiſt in confirming that health, which her preſent happineſs ſeems to have perfectly reſtored.

Sir John, lady Straffon and their daughter, are now at Woodfort; they and my ſiſter Lawſon, are to accompany us to the Hot-wells. Lady Mount Willis has lain in at her houſe in Somerſetſhire—we are to pay her a viſit *en paſſant*—ſhe has got a ſon, and is as happy as ſhe is amiable.—We are all *anxious* to know what is become of Ransford, of his ſtep-mother, and Sir James Miller: but I am much more *ſo*, to embrace my ever valued friend, and if I cannot heal, to ſoothe his ſorrows—may that, at leaſt, be in the power of Seymour's moſt affectionate,

WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XCIII.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

YES, Woodville, I will take your counſel, and haſten to lay hold on the poſſeſſion of the only good that is now left me, your generous friendſhip! I will meet you at the hot-wells in a ſhort time; but I will not live in the ſame houſe with you, nor return from thence to Woodfort. I know the value of your regard too well, to ſuffer it to be productive of miſery to you, or your deſervedly happy wife.—No! Seymour's ſorrows ſhall not caſt a ſhade on the bright ſunſhine of your future days! nor ſubject you to the unavailing pain, of endeavouring to eraſe the dark engrained tints of melancholy, which muſt form the colour of my life to come. Yet I will frequently behold my friend, and with ſincere delight, contemplate his felicity.

I have at laſt had a letter from Ransford. Sure there is faſcination in the marchioneſs's charms! He raves, and is diſtracted at her having diſowned him as a huſband, which ſhe has formally done, by her ſolicitor, in order to recover the remainder of thoſe effects, which were confiſcated on account of his duel with Barnard. She has carried her point; they were reſtored to the marchioneſs de St. Aumont, but her creditors have ſeized on every thing ſhe left. Her huſband's nephew has carried his ſuit againſt her, but has allowed her an annuity of four thouſand livres, while ſhe remains unmarried, in reſpect to his uncle's memory.—I think this income is quite ſufficient for her wants, and infinitely beyond her merits.—I therefore intreat you to reſerve your generoſity for ſome more worthy object.

The now happy St. Far is ſettled in a convent, at Dijon; where ſhe purpoſes leading an exemplary life. Lady Woodville's expence, for ſhe muſt be obeyed, will not amount to more than forty pounds a year.

About

About ten days ago, a monk came to my apartments, and deſired to ſpeak with me. He told me there was a lady in the Carmelites convent, who begged to ſee me, upon an affair of the utmoſt importance to one of my friends. I enquired very particularly who the lady was: he ſaid he knew nothing more of her, than that ſhe was an Engliſhwoman, and was called Jefferſon. He added, that at her requeſt he had been often to ſeek for me, while I was abſent from Paris; that he had given up all hopes of meeting me; but rejoiced at his being more fortunate than he expected, and intreated me to obey the lady's ſummons.

This affair would have been matter of ſpeculation to me, if my mind had been ſufficiently at eaſe to think about it; but without reflecting at all upon the ſubject, I entered the Carmelite's convent at ten o'clock the next morning, and enquired for Mrs. Jefferſon.—I did not wait long in the parlour, when a lady, dreſſed in deep mourning approached the grate.—I fixed my eyes intently upon her, and knew her to be lady Ransford.—A crimſon glow overſpread her cheek when ſhe ſaluted me, and at that moment, ſhe appeared a moſt intereſting object.

To ſave her the confuſion of apologizing for ſending for me, I told her how much I had been diſappointed, at not being able to diſcover her retreat, at my return to Paris, and begged to know if I could be any way ſerviceable to her; and, at the ſame time, intreated ſhe would inform me, of every thing ſhe knew, in relation to the unhappy affair, between captain Barnard and my friend.

Her tears flowed faſt and ſilent, while I ſpoke.—When ſhe perceived that I waited for her reply, ſhe took out her pocket book, and preſenting it to me, ſaid, your lordſhip will there find two letters, which will render any converſation with me, upon this painful ſubject, needleſs.—I commit them to your care, in order that every poſſible uſe may be

made

made of them, for Mr. Ransford's advantage. I bear no enmity to his father or to him, nor do I wiſh to make him an exile from that country to which I never more will return.

I aſked her with as much delicacy as I poſſibly could, what ſcheme of life ſhe intended to purſue, and again repeated the offer of my ſervices to her. She thanked me, and ſaid, that captain Barnard's death had made her think differently, from what ſhe had ever done before; that ſhe was too conſcious of the enormity of her conduct, to think of returning into the world; that ſhe therefore, determined to paſs her days in a convent, but would always have it in her power to quit it, as ſhe did not mean to make any vows.

I really admired the rationality of her ſentiments, and of courſe approved them; but was ignorant by what means ſhe could be ſupported, even in a convent; till ſhe told me, that at her marriage with Sir Harry Ransford, he had ſigned an article, allowing her in caſe of ſeparation, a power of three thouſand pounds, or an annuity of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, during his life; and a jointure of four hundred pounds a year at his death. She ſaid the annuity would be ſufficient for her maintenance; that ſhe deſired no favour from a perſon ſhe was ſuppoſed to have injured, though the fatal connection, between Sir Harry and her, had been the ſource of all her miſeries.

She begged me to forward Barnard's letter to Ransford, and to ſend copies of it to the captain's friends in England, in order to pave the way for Ransford's return. I promiſed to obey her, and took my leave; as I now muſt of you, in order to haſten my ſetting out.—You will probably hear from me once more, before you ſee your unhappy, but

Truly affectionate,

SEYMOUR.

LET-

LETTER XCIV.

Lord SEYMOUR, *To Lord* WOODVILLE.

Amiens.

I HAVE at length taken an everlaſting leave of Paris, and have got ſo far on my way to my native land, but without being ſenſible of that charming enthuſiaſm, which is ſtiled the Amor Patriæ, and which I believe has been oftener deſcribed than felt by voluntary exiles; for I confeſs that I have very little idea of local attachments; perſons, and not places, have engroſſed all the affections of which my heart is capable; and though the ſight of Albion's chalky cliffs, may not inſpire me with much delight, I ſhall certainly feel true pleaſure, when I behold my dear Woodville and his amiable wife.

I ſhould not ſtop on my journey to tell you this, becauſe I am ſure you muſt know it untold, but my worthy, my faithful Wilſon, whom I have long conſidered as my friend, though he ſtill acts as my ſervant, left Paris with a ſlight fever on him: travelling has, perhaps, increaſed his malady, and I purpoſe halting here, till he is quite recovered.

I gave you an account of my interview, with lady Ransford, in my laſt, and will now inform you, of the purport of thoſe letters, which were found in captain Barnard's pocket, after the duel. That, which was addreſſed to her ladyſhip, was filled with tender adieus, and ſoft contrition for having involved her in diſtreſs, and leaving her probably expoſed to miſery, in a foreign land; with the moſt ſolemn intreaties not to proſecute Mr. Ransford, in caſe he ſhould ſurvive, as he there acknowledged, that he had drawn the duel on himſelf.

That

That which he wrote to Ransford was ſhort, yet contained the fulleſt declaration, of his having ſought the quarrel, and its conſequences, from a wearineſs of life, which he ſaid muſt be for ever embittered, by reflecting on the baſeneſs of his behaviour towards lady Harriet Hanbury, as well as on the unworthy part he had acted, in ſeducing lady Ransford from her duty. He implored his forgiveneſs for the injury he had committed againſt the honour of his family, and for having engaged him to hazard his life, from a too earneſt deſire of getting rid of his own.

How inconſiſtent is the conduct of this unfortunate man! his attention to the preſervation of his antagoniſt's life, is certainly noble; but what an act of inhumanity was it, to lay Ransford under the fatal neceſſity of becoming his executioner? or how are we to reconcile the ſpirit of this laſt action, with the unworthy tenor of his former life?

I am convinced there is no human creature ſo intirely loſt to virtue, as not to be poſſeſſed of one good quality at leaſt; which if known, and properly cultivated, might in ſome meaſure counterbalance its owner's vices to ſociety; but we are all too apt to reprobate a faulty character; too indolent to ſearch out the latent virtues of another's heart; and find it more for our eaſe, to take it for granted, that a vicious perſon muſt be vicious throughout, than to ſeek for a grain of wheat in a buſhel of chaff.

After many fruitleſs inquiries, I am informed that Sir James Miller has obtained a commiſſion in the Hungarian ſervice, by the intereſt of ſome of his friends here, and that he left Paris about three weeks ago, in order to join his regiment. Ranſford is at Bruſſels, but the marchioneſs and he do not live together. I have forwarded Barnard's letter to him, and flatter myſelf we ſhall ſoon ſee him in England.

My parting with the dear remains of the Beaumont family was truly affecting, madame de Carignon

non came to Paris, on purpoſe to bid me adieu. Captain Beaumont preſented me with his and his father's pictures; he had before given me Charlotte's portrait.—alas! it was an uſeleſs gift, as her dear image is too ſtrongly graved on my ſad heart!

I will not dwell upon this ſubject longer; but it is impoſſible that I ſhould turn my thoughts to any other now.—I can therefore only ſay,

Farewel.

SEYMOUR.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.